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Life and Death in the Kingdom of Shoes: Zlín, Bat'a, and Czechoslovakia, 1923-1941.

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Life and Death in the Kingdom of Shoes: Zlín, Bat'a, and Czechoslovakia, 1923-1941

by

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Dedication

To Leslie Lee and Barbara Ann, your unwavering support and unquestionable love has made all the difference.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation began while researching the Czechoslovak Pavilion at the New York World's Fair of 1939-40 in the National Archives in Prague during the summer of 2006. There, thanks to the generosity of the Slavic Department at the University of Texas and the State Department's Foreign Language and Area Studies program, I was able to spend my summer searching through a large collection of documents, which led me to Bat'a. Chiefly, I was curious as to how the company came to have such a powerful voice in Czechoslovak affairs by the late 1930s.

As my questions about the company began to shape into a dissertation, a collection of organizations and individuals allowed me to pursue the project. The American Council of Learned Societies provided a yearlong research fellowship that allowed me to do all of the necessary archival work in the Czech Republic. While on this fellowship, archivists at the Moravian Regional Archive - workplace Zlín – were exceptionally helpful and friendly, as they allowed me to work outside of normal hours and directed me to a number of great documents. I am also deeply grateful for David Valůšek and Kamila Nečasová, the director and archivist who not only helped me find excellent sources at the State Regional Archives of Zlín, but welcomed me into their lives with a rare generosity. Likewise Martin Marek provided me with a steadfast companion in the archives, who was always willing to expand my knowledge of Bat'a over a bowl of goulash. In addition, the staff at the National Archives and the National Library in Prague helped me locate a broad range of material. Finally, Drahomíra Jílková allowed me to stay at her lovely house and improved my Czech immensely while in Prague.

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My family, Lindsay, Henry, Les, Virginia, and Barbara, have given me support along the entire journey, not to mention plenty of food.

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Life and Death in the Kingdom of Shoes: Zlín, Bat'a, and Czechoslovakia, 1923-1941

Zachary Austin Doleshal

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Supervisor: Mary Neuburger

Life and Death in the Kingdom of Shoes is an exploration into the lives of the people of Zlín, Czechoslovakia from 1923 to 1941. During this period Zlín became the headquarters for one of the most successful commercial concerns in the world, the Bat'a Company. Alongside its explosive economic growth, the company attempted to transform its workforce and town into a highly rationalized operating system, which held strikingly new determinants for inclusion and exclusion within the body politic.

From planners, architects, and executives to criminals, housewives, and students, *Life and Death in the Kingdom of Shoes* encompasses high and low to suggest that the conflicts and compromises of those living in Bat'a's model industrial towns produced a distinct ideology with its own symbols, heroes, and discourse. The ideology, Bata-ism, was part of a transnational project to design, build, and control cities based on scientific principles of rationalism. The project transcended national, class, and religious boundaries to offer a new way of identification: the Bata-man or woman. Work, play, gender, loyalty to the company, and appearance became much more important in deciding

one's place within Bat'a's twenty four towns, and some 3,600 retail outlets, than nation, class, or religion.

This dissertation challenges dominant historical narratives of Czechoslovakia and Bat'a in the interwar period, which have focused almost exclusively on national conflict and on the designs of the executives. By turning attention to the debates and implementation of something that radically changed people's lives - the rationalization of everyday life – *Life and Death in the Kingdom of Shoes* adds a crucial chapter to our understanding of interwar Czechoslovakia The primary aim is to peel away the facade of the utopian company project to locate, in the words of the historian Richard Stites, "oceans of misery, disorder, chaos, corruption, and whimsicality that went with it." With the stories of people like Marie Urbašková, a prostitute who led police on a fool's errand, *Life and Death in the Kingdom of Shoes* allows disparate narratives to unravel tidy conceptions of Bat'a's utopian project.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

At 8:35 on the morning of May 1, 1937 factory sirens in Zlín, Czechoslovakia rang out, signaling to the entire Bat'a workforce that the most important day of the year had officially begun. Some forty thousand employees made their way to twelve meeting points to gather posters, double check immaculate outfits, and climb aboard allegorical floats. The sirens sounded again eighteen minutes later and eleven organized sections of workers began marching through the factory complex. Giant standards flew at the head of the columns declaring, among other things, "Long Live J.A. Bat'a," "We Want to Go into the World," and, "We Believe in Aviation." Marching bands playing pieces composed for and by these *Batovci*, or Bata-people, followed the banners, while workers sang ditties in their organized groups; each department wearing matching outfits. The eleven groups arrived at 9 am to fill Labor Square, the symbolic center of the Bat'a Empire, where they were surrounded by some fifty thousand "guests", consisting of friends and family as well as visitors from all over the world. All had gathered to witness and participate in the spectacle of the Bat'a Mayday. Once in place, the workers and guests waited for the arrival of a twelfth marching group, with the "šef," chief executive Jan Bat'a, at its head.

While the other groups were en route to the square, Jan's plane landed just outside the factory perimeter. Though he had arrived in Central Europe several days earlier, he coordinated his arrival in Zlín with May Day in order to make a dramatic return. As he stepped off the plane, a line of uniformed "Young Men" from the elite Bat'a management

school, who lived, worked, and studied under the close supervision of the company, greeted Jan with salutes. After greeting the young men, Jan, his family, and other executives, set off on foot to the square. Along the route people cheered wildly. Some threw flowers as Jan walked by like an unchallenged king in a kingdom of shoes.

The executive group walked to the entrance of the Zlín cinema, the largest movie house in Europe at the time.[1] On that day, its entrance had been converted into a speaker's platform. On its façade, employees had constructed a map of the world tracking the šef's trip with a large paper-maché airplane. Jan climbed the steps to the speaker's platform. As he approached the microphone the crowd erupted, Bat'a built Zlín XII planes flew overhead, and Jan acknowledged the crowd with a Mussolini-like wave.[2]

Yet, underneath this spectacle of uniformity, disparate voices within and without the company murmured a disquiet in Czechoslovakia's industrial utopia. The people, so uniform in appearance, held widely varied paths in getting to Labor Square, and widely varied interpretations as to what it meant to be standing there, cheering the šef. For on that day workers such as Anna Čevelová, and Vaclav Kamas, who would be soon pushed out of the firm for their communist sympathies, marched together with Jan Daněk and Vincenc Jaroněk, the city police's most accomplished undercover agent and the head of the company's intelligence service; whose lives were spent rooting out disloyal elements. Also there were Alexander Reinharcz, a struggling Jewish student from Podcarpathian Ruthenia, and Paul Zuppal, a German student excelling at stitching who would go on to

[1] Built in 1933 in a functionalist style, the cinema held 2200 seats. Eduard Staša, *Z historie zlínských kin*. Zlínské noviny, 1991. http://www.zlin.estranky.cz/clanky/novy-zlin/z-historie-zlinskych-kin.html

[2] My description of MayDay in 1937 is taken from photographs, newspaper accounts, and company records of the event found in the Bat'a archive in the Moravský Zemský Archiv-pracovište Zlín (MZA-ZLÍN).

be a department manager. In the crowd, one could find Hans Tauber, a small business owner whose life would be twice rocked before the close of the decade by an affair with a younger woman and by the aryanization of his store, as well as Ladislava Fornoušková, who as a teenager had been expelled from the city for ten years for living too promiscuous a life. And finally there was Geza Stujlater, a local Roma, who would be arrested some twenty seven times for various minor offenses over his lifetime. Even among those on the dais, and at the lead of the parade sections, the utopian project held varied promises.[3] For Jan's increasingly Il Duce style began to alienate longtime general manager and mayor of Zlín Dominík Čipera and executive Hugo Vavrečka. The Bat'a world, then, was not nearly as neat as the spectacle on the square would have us think, nor as easy to read as it has been previously portrayed.

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"Rural life cannot survive the impact of rationalization."[4]

That Zlín would be the setting for a company run society that could produce a spectacle like that of Mayday 1937 was far from inevitable. After all, there are neither valuable mineral deposits nor particularly rich farmland in the valley of the river Dřevnice in central-eastern Moravia. The river, prone to flooding in the spring, is little

[3] As to the presence of these individuals it is an assumption on the part of the author that Tauber, Fornoušková, and Stujlater, were actually in attendance. Based on police and city records found in the Archiv Města Zlína which is found in the Státní Okrésni Archiv – Zlín (SoKA-Zlín), they were living in the city in May 1937. The others were in attendance as the company required it.

[4] A.J.P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809-1918.* London: Hamish Hamilton, 1948. p.30.

more than a creek in summer and perennially unnavigable. Surrounded by the heavily forested hills of the Western Carpathians, the valley has never been in the crossroads of major trade routes and remains an out-of-the-way location for even today's traveler. But for small farm plots, the occasional winery, and timber harvesting, the area's inhabitants have had few natural sources of revenue with which to entice development. And while the broken terrain, dense forests, and unpredictable rivers have led to a rich cultural diversity, with the Hana, Wallachians, and the Moravian Slovaks, or Slovacko, as well as Roma and German-speaking nobles and burghers carving out respective cultural zones in an area roughly the size of Delaware, the geography of the region also insured a marginality until the modern era.

For centuries the people of this hill country were attuned to the seasonal patterns of traditional Moravian village life. Daylight, temperature, and rainfall dictated the work day. Celebration was Catholic in name but often tied to much older traditions. During Easter, for example, girls of the village would (and still do) give brightly painted eggs to boys equipped with *pomlazky*, a whip made from willow branches. If the girl refused the boys' egg request, they were threatened with a beating. Thus the pagan traditions of the early Slavic peoples continued on under Catholicism, blending into a mix of practices and beliefs that can best be termed Moravian folk culture. Marked by brightly colored costumes, a blend of Czech-Slovak dialects/ethnicities, folk architecture, music, and strong brandy made from plums and pears called *slivovice;* Moravian folk culture was the outcome of centuries of small, isolated communities interacting through religious festivals and pastoral trading. Rarely did decrees from imperial authorities in Prague or

Vienna affect the seasonal rhythms of the area's inhabitants. True, during the Thirty Years War Protestant Wallachians staged a dramatic uprising against the Catholic armies of the Habsburg Empire and took control of the region for a time, but the devastation that followed their defeat in 1644 sent the Wallachians back into the hills, and served as a harsh deterrent for the rest of the region's ethnicities. There would not be another serious challenge to the authority of the Habsburgs in the region again.[5]

In Zlín, the largest town in the valley, which consisted of 200 buildings in 1846, the Church and the chateau dominated the townscape. By far the largest buildings, both served to visually reinforce the position of the Catholic Church and the Habsburg nobility in local affairs. From the seventeenth century until the late nineteenth, the famously wealthy Wallenstein family owned the centrally located chateau. There, the nobles could walk the grounds of their thirty acre park and go hunting in their reserves in the hills. Yet their Zlín manor was by no means a Konopište, the decadent hunting chateau of Franz Joseph, and was rarely visited by the high nobility.[6]

Of course, the noble and ecclesiastic authorities lived a markedly different life than the majority of the populace. Until the end of the nineteenth century, people in the region mostly engaged in animal husbandry, forestry, and farming, none of which created vast amounts of wealth. Due to the practice of subdividing farmland among male heirs, by the late nineteenth century the surrounding area around the town was a dense

[5] Pokluda, Zdeněk. *Sedm století zlínských dějin*. Zlín: Klub novinářů, 1991.
[6] Zdeněk Pokluda. *Zámek Zlín*. Ve Zlíně: Státní okresní archiv, 1998.

patchwork of small lots, often no larger than 3 acres and frequently exhausted. By all indicators the town was poor.[7]

Thus there was nothing inevitable about the development of Zlín into one of the interwar world's largest company towns. Nothing suggesting it could harbor the largest shoe manufacturing concern in the world. Indeed, the principles of Henry Ford and Frederick Taylor were no more suited to this valley than they were anywhere else in Europe. And while cattle ranches provided the areas cobblers with relatively low cost leather, they were not grand enough to support one of the world's largest shoe factories. I cannot claim, as some have, that the "hardheaded Wallachian spirit" gave the Bat'a system its distinctiveness.[8] In fact, Zlín held more obstacles than incentives for a major industrial enterprise; it is therefore all the more surprising that it became the site of one of Europe's most enthusiastic applications of the principles of modern management and production.

The Bat'a factory began as a family enterprise in 1894 when Tomas Bat'a and his sister Anna established a small shoe factory in Zlín with the help of an endowment from their father, Antonín.[9] The factory grew steadily, employing 250 workers and becoming the eighth largest shoe company in Austria-Hungary by 1903. What set Bat'a apart from his competitors was his willingness and eagerness to adopt new techniques and make new styles of shoes. He invented the revolutionary "seglaky," also known as "Batovky,"

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[7] Zdeněk Pokluda. *Zlín*. Praha: Paseka, 2008.

[8] Zdeněk Pokluda, "Náčrt portrétu Tomáše Bati" in *Tomáš Baťa: Doba a Společnost*. Sborník příspěvků ze stejnojmenné zlínské konference, pořádané ve dnech 30.listopadu – 1.prosince 2006. Nadace Tomáše Bati: Brno, 2007.

[9] Throughout this work I prefer to spell Tomas' name in its Anglicized version, as it has been spelled as such over many decades in English language publications.

which was the first all canvas shoe in Europe. Cheap to make and meant to be discarded after a few months, the shoe caused considerable uproar among shoe makers at the time, but proved widely popular with customers who enjoyed their light weight, availability, and price.

Working off of the success of the seglaky, Tomas traveled through Germany and the United States to learn the latest developments in shoe manufacturing. Visiting the Ford factories in 1905, he became completely convinced that American systems of industrial management were the way of the future. When he returned, he bought out his sister and became sole proprietor of the company. A few years later after the outbreak of World War I, Bat'a won a contract to supply army boots to the Austrian military when he travelled to Vienna and doggedly pursued Austrian authorities. The contract led to an immediate expansion, and the company's payroll soared to include some 5,000 employees by 1917. The exigencies of World War I also led to Bat'a's first serious foray into vertical organization, as he was forced to spend considerable energy guaranteeing supplies of both food and materials for his workers. As a result, the company bought significant farmland and cattle ranches in the region.

During the tough economic times that followed the war, the company let thousands of employees go, and warehouses began filling with unsold Bat'a shoes. To deal with the crisis, Tomas and his managers decided on the radical solution to cut shoe prices in half, as well as all wages. In return, the company promised workers drastically reduced food prices in company owned canteens as well as the promise of company built housing. This was the first major step to becoming a welfare capitalist society, where the

company would provide all of life's necessities. The measures were a resounding success as Bat'a's workforce and profits began to expand again by 1923.

Also in 1923, the company formed its own political party to run in the local elections. With Tomas at its head and loyal workers on the slate of candidates, the "Batovci" or Batapeople promised an end to politics and to manage the municipality along scientific lines. To them, scientific management meant vastly improving the town's infrastructure and overhauling education. It also meant more parks and company approved social spaces, like libraries, theaters, and sporting venues. In addition, the Batovci promised a tightening of the town's morality laws by closing down bars and restricting liquor licenses. They vowed to eliminate the oftentimes bitter feuds between political parties that dominated the political life of Zlín after World War One by supplanting them with the top-down structure of the company. The Batovci won handily, and the town's affairs merged with that of the company's.[10]

Some four years after the Batovci's victory in the local elections, the company experienced an explosive period of growth when it introduced a full assembly line process for the production of shoes and implemented its unique management system. The management system, invented by executive Dominik Cipera, created thousands of small 10-15 person units inside of larger departments. Each unit competed against each other in a race to produce the cheapest and best item they were assigned. The system encouraged quality work and timely work with monetary rewards and special privileges. Alongside

[10] Cekota, Antonín, and Tomáš Baťa. *Jak rostl Zlín: naše volby r. 1923-1927*. Zlín: Nákladem "Knihovny Baťovy služby veřejnosti", 1931.

the development of the Bat'a management system, Bat'a attempted to mechanize the manufacturing process. By 1930 the company had machines for every step of production, and each machine had its own interchangeable motor. While reluctant to patent many of its breakthroughs, the company nevertheless became pioneers in shoe production, creating a highly organized and mechanized system capable of exponential expansion. The successful mechanization of the factories though, coincided with a new crises.[11]

When nations across the world raised tariffs at the end of the 1920s, Bat'a, a major exporter of shoes, was faced with a serious dilemma. As in the past, the company adopted to the situation with considerable boldness. The company's solution was to export its factory model to its markets and build mini-Zlíns across the world. Beginning with Borovo, Yugoslavia in 1931, Bat'a would rapidly build satellite towns from India to England throughout the 1930s. These factory towns allowed the company to circumvent high tariffs and respond to the tastes and economies of regional markets. Profits soared.

On July 12, 1932, just as the company seemed assured to survive the Great Depression in an even stronger position, Tomas died in a plane crash on his way from Zlín to Switzerland. His half-brother, Jan, took power. Jan would prove to be significantly different than Tomas in interests and management style, but he also proved to be a highly effective leader as the company expanded nearly three-fold from his takeover in 1932 until the outbreak of the Second World War.

[11]Rybka, Zdeněk. *Základní zásady Baťova systému pro podnikatele a vedoucí pracovníky: (studie)*. Ve Zlíně: Fakulta managementu a ekonomiky, Univerzita Tomáše Bati, 2008.

By 1939, the Bat'a Company employed over 84,000, ran 5,000 retail stores, and operated 25 factories in 11 countries across the globe. It had become the largest shoe manufacturer in the world, with the ability to produce over half a million pairs of shoes a day. In addition, the company produced tires, toys, electric motors, and even airplanes, as well as operating the largest import-export business in the country, Kotva. Before the outbreak of the Second World War, Bat'a accounted for a staggering 60 percent of all exports from Czechoslovakia.[12] The unrivaled success had much to do with Tomas' willingness to adopt Fordist and Taylorist principles for manufacturing and the Endicott-Johnson Company in New York's welfare capitalist company town model, which greatly reduced dissent and stabilized an industrial workforce. Like these great welfare capitalist enterprises in the world, Bat'a strove to be completely vertically integrated. Bat'a-owned farms produced the eggs and milk that Bat'a employees would eat at Bat'a run canteens. Yet Bat'a was much more than mimicry. For the Company developed its own management system, its own pricing plan – the now ubiquitous 99 pricing model – and its own architectural style – the famed Bat'a functionalism of brick, iron, and glass.

From 1923, when Batamen swept the municipal elections of Zlín and essentially eliminated all political parties from local contests, to the appointment of Dominik Čipera as Minister for Public Works in 1938, a position of considerable power in post-Munich Czecho-Slovakia, the Bat'a Company pushed for a radically modernist agenda. Throughout the interwar period Batamen vociferously called for public works projects inside Czechoslovakia using conscription labor. They argued for the elimination of all

[12] Zelený, Milan. *Cesty k úspěchu: trvalé hodnoty soustavy Baťa*. [Brno]: Čintámani, 2005.

"politics" and their replacement by scientific management. They sought to radically remake the country into a densely populated, thoroughly integrated modern state through parental incentives, country-wide infrastructure programs, and the elimination of local difference.[13] Yet the Bat'a politic remained consistently cosmopolitan, and, much like the Soviet Union, the chief requirement for upward mobility within the Bat'a system was loyalty; nationality played a role only insofar as it affected profitability. All of these considerations meant that the Bat'a Company's grafting of American industrial philosophies onto Moravian soil would lead to a uniquely Central European brand of welfare capitalism.[14] While building a commercial concern from a society of small farmers, artisans, and aristocrats, into a global concern, the company developed a way of life, an operating system that was a radical departure from the past. It was an operating system that required demands of its population that other citizens of Czechoslovakia did not have and presented a unique challenge to the ideals of Thomas Masaryk's First Republic of Czechoslovakia.

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[13] The clearest political manifestation of the Bat'a agenda for Czechoslovakia can be found in Baťa, Jan Antonín. *Budujme stát (pro 40,000.000 lidí)*. Ve Zlíně: Tisk, 1937.

[14] Welfare capitalism generally refers to two structures, one in the United States and the other in Europe. The American variety describes the company town system of management, where companies provided a near total social service for their workers. Yet the term is best understood not through a bifurcated lens but through historical context. In the interwar period in Europe several companies approximated the American definition, with company controlled communities that tried to harmonize industry with a comprehensive social program for employees. One of the most curious aspects of welfare capitalism is its insistence on rationalizing *all* aspects of life, and yet maintaining a paternal system whose leadership is almost invariably familiar and whose succession is almost always based on hereditary. Thus, the title of this work, Life and Death in the Kingdom of Shoes, makes a specific claim that the Bat'a system had significant parallels with absolutist monarchy, and indeed was sub-consciously informed by the imperial structure of the Habsburgs. Thus while trying to eliminate the old, the Bat'a Company perpetuated a patriarchal hereditary organization. From the beginning of the system there was an inherent tension between the traditional and the modern whose synthesis was a radical departure in everyday patterns but a strong continuity in structures of power and deference.

In essence, particularly in Zlín, Bat'a created a company run society, which held strikingly new determinants for inclusion and exclusion. Instead of religion, class, and nationality, the company's ideology – Bataism – held sobriety, appearance, work ethic, and above all loyalty to the corporation as the key traits of the Bat'a person. And the Company went to great lengths to inculcate these traits into its workforce. Of course, this transnational company philosophy was at all times complicated by and embedded within the context of interwar Czechoslovakia. Oftentimes employees drank, slept around, and acted nationally. Still, life in Zlín offered an arresting alternative to the peoples of Central Europe, as it offered a life where the company was supposed to supersede the nation.

Led by a vision of a rationalized industrial society where man and machine, family and factory, worked together seamlessly, Bat'a embarked on one of the most ambitious social engineering projects a private company has ever attempted. A particularly charismatic and determined man adopted American business models and forced them upon his workforce and later the city as a whole. It was not that Zlín's society cultivated its rationalization, but that it was weak to temper it. The result was a dramatic and rapid change to the everyday lives of the people of the valley. It is not surprising; therefore, that Bat'a's revolutionary project has attracted a sizeable amount of attention among historians, politicians, and economists over the last eighty years.

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Most commentators have not focused on the messy reality of life in the Bat'a world, but rather view the system as an abstract, already accomplished ordering of all

aspects of life. Thus, while the rationalization of Zlín has provoked widely different, and often highly emotional, responses, there is a general consensus that Bat'a accomplished its social project. How to read that social project, though, is highly contogent on context and perspective.

From the left, the Bat'a system since the publication of the widely distributed pamphlet *Bat'a Bankrot* in 1931 has received sustained criticism. This pamphlet, funded by the Communist Party, focused on the inhuman pace of "rationalized work", the company's union busting, and the omnipotence of the company in everyday life. In a way, this critique framed the argument for what would come after the World War II. Take for example the scathing critique found in the book *Botostroj*. Written by a former employee, Svatopluk Turek, in 1946, the book is a fictionalized account of working in Zlín. For Svatopluk, company management had absolute control over every aspect of the workers' lives and the boss "thinks about everything." As a result, Turek tried to convince the world of the evils of the Bat'a system through its omnipotent status in its employee's lives.[15] The book was made into a film in 1954 by K.M. Walló and did much to cement the idea of the relentless oppression of the workers in the Bat'a system in the minds of a generation of Czechoslovaks. Undoubtedly, the most thorough account of the company from a leftist perspective came from the historian Bohumil Lehár in 1960. While filled with valuable statistical information drawn from company archives, Lehár was beholden to the dictates of the Communist Party, and as a result his book is overwhelmingly focused on the activities of members of the Party who worked

[15] Svatopluk Turek. *Botostroj*. Praha: Nakladatelství Svoboda, 1946.

clandestinely in the company. His monumental history described the Bat'a system as "the pinnacle of exploitation."[16] Such an approach toward the company in the Bat'a Era (1923-1939) has been sustained by a dwindling but still vocal group of left-leaning academics like Stanislav Holubec, whose short but effective article, "Silní milují život. Utopie, ideologie a biopolitika baťovského Zlína", makes the claim that the company represented one particularly strong version of corporate fascism. While being one of the only scholars to use Foucault's concept of biopolitics to discuss Bat'a, Holubec nevertheless falls in the all too common category of commentators who view Bataism as an accomplished way of life that was set in place in the early 1920s and did not change over time. For him, and others, Bat'a was entirely successful in its sinister high modernist project.[17] For the vast majority of leftist critiques, the Bat'a system's complete corporate hegemony represents a frightening stage of industrial capitalism: social-fascism.

Meanwhile, the champions of the system from company men in the Bat'a era to exiles to the now mainstream commentators of Bat'a have maintained that life in Zlín in the interwar period was a realization of utopian dreams. During the Cold War, the Bat'a cause was championed almost exclusively in print by one man, Antony Cekota. Cekota was the chief propagandist for the firm in the interwar period and never left his position while in exile in Canada. Cekota's biography of Tomas Bat'a, while providing excellent anecdotes, is a hagiography, claiming that the man was a national hero and his system

[16] Bohumil.Lehár, *Dějiny Baťova koncernu (1894-1945)*. Praha: Státní nakladatelství politické literatury, 1960.
[17] S. Holubec,"Silní milují život. Utopie, ideologie a biopolitika baťovského Zlína", Kuděj 2009/2 pg 30-55.

created democratization and opportunity for all.[18] Overwhelming praise of the system has not been confined to self-proclaimed Batamen, however. Following the Velvet Revolution, Czech scholars revisioned the company in a positivist light. For example, Radomíra Sedláková, Architectural Collection Curator at the National Gallery in Prague writes, "what we could say, of course, is that in Zlín, they succeeded in realizing one of the great social utopias that European society had been contemplating since the beginning of the Modern Age."[19] Indeed, positivism has become the dominant trend among recent commentators of Bat'a. Milan Zelený, a Professor of Management at Fordham University and The Tomáš Baťa University in Zlín, has routinely used Bat'a's success as a model for management in the prepresent day.[20] Likewise, politicians and economists in the Czech Republic have used Bat'a as proof that welfare capitalism works, and that, more importantly, the Czech nation has a longstanding tradition of successful entrepreneurship.[21]

Yet a significant, if small, group of scholars has begun to move away from the normative debates and the hegemonic descriptions surrounding Bat'a. Several recent works have significantly contributed to our understanding of the highly complex and sophisticated Bata system and the highly complex lives of those that lived within it. Of these, Martin Marek and Vít Strobach's work on employees who were transferred abroad

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[18] Anthony Cekota. *Entrepreneur Extraordinary: The Biography of Tomas Bata*. Rome: University Press of the International University of Social Studies, 1968. Pg. 185-86.
[19] *The Bata Phenomenon: Zlin Architecture 1910-1960.* Regional Gallery of Fine Arts: Zlin, 2009.
[20] Milan Zelený, *Cesty k úspěchu: trvalé hodnoty soustavy řízení Baťa*. Ve Zlíně: Univerzita Tomáše Bati, Fakulta managementu a ekonomiky, 2001.
[21] *Tomáš Baťa: Doba a Společnost*. Sborník příspěvků ze stejnojmenné zlínské konference, pořádané ve dnech 30.listopadu – 1.prosince 2006. Nadace Tomáše Bati: Brno, 2007.

during the years 1938-41, Ondřej Ševeček's *Zrození Baťovy průmyslové metropole,* and the collected essays found in the forthcoming publication *Company Towns of the Bat'a Concern*, are especially important.[22]

Ševeček has written a careful micro-analytical history of the built environment of Zlín that places it within the wider history of European urbanization. He finds that Zlín was one of two places in Europe, the other being Siemensstadt in Berlin, that tried to create a new type of "industrial person and work." While curiously leaving out the Soviet Union, he argues that Zlín was "one of the most important experimental areas in the family of modern civilization."[23] Ševeček goes on to detail the history of the built environment of Zlín to reveal both the rapid growth of the town, but also to correct the Bat'a myth that most workers had their own semi-detached house on a leafy street. Most workers, it turns out, lived in dormitories and did not stay at the company for lifetime employment. While providing But the individual stories of these workers go untold. Furthermore, Ševeček gives little inclination as to the often clumsy and heavy-handed application of Bat'a discipline, and little sense as to how the Bat'a habitus changed over time.

Marek and Strobach have carefully combed through thousands of personnel cards in order to investigate the ways in which the company and its employees determined who would be sent abroad during the crises years of 1938-41, when several thousand

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[22] M. Marek and Vit Strobach. "Batismus, urychlená modernita a průkopníci práce. Personální politika Baťova koncernu a řízené přesuny zaměstnanců v letech 1938-1941". *Moderni dějiny: sborník k dejínam 19. a 20. století* (Modern History: Studies into 19th and 20th century history) year: 2010, vol: 18, number: 1, pages: 103-153.

[23] Ševeček, Ondřej. *Zrození Baťovy průmyslové metropole: továrna, městský prostor a společnost ve Zlíně v letech 1900-1938*. České Budějovice: Veduta, 2009. Pg.45-46.

employees left Zlín to sites all over the world. Their findings present one of the few scholarly accounts of a multi-directional flow between company and employees. In fact, we see that the decisions as to who would go came about to due to improvisation and chance. Thus Marek and Strobach offer one of the only real challenges to the discourse of a hegemonic company that ran thousands of people's lives by issuing orders from one management center.[24]

The recent conference in Prague, Company Towns of the Bat'a Concern, furthered complicating our previous understanding of the Bat'a project in the interwar period. Bringing together scholars from across Europe and North America, the conference focused on the company's impact and interactions as it expanded its town model across the globe.[25] Scholars are just now connecting the varied ways societies embraced and protested the company, and the ways in which the Bat'a project fit in with other company town projects during the period. The collective picture is one of stunning diversity in the ways people approached the company and stunning similarity between the various company town models and projects. The forthcoming publication resulting from this conference promises to illustrate the complex interplay between the high modernist

[24] M. Marek and Vit Strobach. "Batismus, urychlená modernita a průkopníci práce. Personální politika Baťova koncernu a řízené přesuny zaměstnanců v letech 1938-1941". *Moderni dějiny: sborník k dejínam 19. a 20. stoleti* (Modern History: Studies into 19th and 20th century history) year: 2010, vol: 18, number: 1, pages: 103-153.

[25] In the interwar period the company established production facilities and towns across Europe: Borovo Croatia (1931); Ottmuth (then in Germany, now Otmet, Poland, 1931); Mohlin, Switzerland (1932); Chelmek, Poland (1932); Hellocourt and Vernon (Bataville), France (1932); Tilbury, England (1932); Best, Holland (1933); and Martfu, Hungary (1941).
Beyond Europe: Batanagar and Konnagar, India (1934); Belcamp, U.S.A (1936); Alexandria, Egypt (1938); Batapur, Pakistan (India,1939); Dhaka, Bangledesh (India,1939) Gwelo, Rhodesia (present-day Gweru-Zimbabwe, 1939); Pinetown, South Africa (1939); Limuru, Kenya (1939); Chosica, Peru (1939); Sandak, Mexico (1939); Batawa, Canada (1939); Batatuba, Bataypora, Bataguassu, and Mariapolis, Brazil (1941). (135).

ideology of Bataism, which tried to standardize factory towns, and the culturally diverse populations that negotiated that attempt.[26]

While a growing number of scholars in Europe have looked to investigate company towns and utopian projects in the 20th century, American historians of Czechoslovakia have given little space to the hugely influential Bat'a concern. In fact, of the recent American scholarship on Czechoslovakia in the interwar period, it is exceedingly rare to find even a footnote dealing with the Bat'a phenomenon.[27] Instead, nationalist conflict remains at the center of almost all English-language histories of the period.[28] Of the few works which do mention the Bat'a Company, there tends to be a good deal of misinformation. Chad Bryant's *Prague in Black*, which deals with the Nazi occupation of Prague, and Mary Heimann's *Czechoslovakia: the State that Failed* claim that the Bat'a Company retro-fitted their factories in Zlín to produce V-2 rockets during World War Two, which is untrue.[29] In addition, Heimann claims that the company also began producing tires during the war, when in fact Bat'a was the leading source of tires

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[26] "Company Towns of the Bat'a Concern": 24-25 March 2011, Academic Conference Centre. Husova 4a, Prague 1.

[27] Even the preeminent economic historian of Czechoslovakia in the English language, Alice Teichova, did not discuss the company in any detail. See, for example, *The Czechoslovak Economy, 1918-1980*. London: Routledge, 1988.

[28] One of the few exceptions is Derek Sayer's The Coasts of Bohemia, which spends a good deal of time looking at transnational cultural movements in Bohemia. *The Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998.

[29] Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007. Pg 182. Heimann, Mary. *Czechoslovakia: The State That Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009. When I first started this project, I thought that the company town had become a major center of V-2 rocket production during WWII because of a brief passage in a well-received book on Prague under Nazi occupation. I thought, from shoes to V-2 rockets, what a great story! So I approached David Valůšek, chief archivist for the Zlín regional archives, and asked, "what do you have on the V-2 rockets?" He gave me a puzzled look. "Where did you get this information? How do I not know about this!?" In over a year of archival research and a thorough reading of secondary literature available I have not found a single piece of evidence that Bat'a's factories in Zlín produced V-2s.

in the country by 1937.[30] Other than that, though, the central place of the Bat'a enterprise in the lives of the people of Czechoslovakia goes unmentioned. Indeed, Heimann's recent general history of Czechoslovakia mentions its world-class material culture, Bat'a shoes in particular, in one dismissive paragraph, as an afterthought to an argument which posits that the state "failed." Bat'a and Zlín, it seems, remain inconvenient to western attitudes, which hold that Czechoslovakia was torn apart by the forces of nationalism.[31] Furthermore, neither book draws attention to the rationalization debate that raged throughout the interwar period. My research uncovered a wealth of information on this debate, which shows how the debate over rationalizing society and industry stretched across political and ethnic divisions. From these debates a new way to look at the interwar period, one that focuses on the paths of modernity, emerges.

The general lack of scholarly engagement is unfortunate when considering that the Bat'a story challenges the dominant historiographical focus on nation and nationalism in East Central Europe. For the last twenty years, American historians of Central Europe have been intensely devoted to the study of nationalism, mostly in order to expose the unsound logic of nationalist ideals.[32] Yet the Bat'a story reveals the prevalence of corporate identities that often superceded Czech nationalism and was at odds with Czech

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[30] Šetka, František. *Technická příručka pneu Baťa pro prodavače pneumatik*. Zlín: Tisk, 1946. Pg. 6.
[31] Mary Heimann. *Czechoslovakia: The State That Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
[32] A few of the most important works are: Zahra, Tara. *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008. King, Jeremy. *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2002. Wingfield, Nancy M. *Creating the Other: Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*. New York: Bergham Books, 2003. Judson, Pieter M. *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria*. Cambridge, Mass. [u.a.]: Harvard Univ. Press, 2006

chauvinism (at least until 1938). Furthermore, the history of the company challenges the almost exclusive focus historians have placed on nationalists' struggle to gain adherents and the so-called amphibians' apathy to these attempts. Highlighting the rationalization process instead of the nationalization process allows for a nuanced approach to the interwar period. While these two processes were happening at the same time, rationalization often meant sublimating nationalist tendencies in order to make the highest profit. It also meant conforming to an aesthetic of efficiency that many nationalists found objectionable.

Yet while social, political, and cultural histories of Czechoslovakia in the English language have largely overlooked Bat'a, architectural historians, film scholars, and art historians have begun to extensively research the people involved with designing the look of Bat'a's Zlín. The architectural historian Kimberly Zarecor has traced the development of apartment housing during socialism to architects who worked for Bat'a in the interwar period. By doing so, she has made the all too rare connection between the socialist period and the Bat'a era, which has opened fascinating questions of continuity between the two systems that await the historian.[33] Petr Szczepanik has also highlighted the centrality of Bat'a to Czechoslovakia by following the development of its media network. In his article "The Aesthetics of Rationalization: the Media Network in the Bata Company and the Town of Zlín" he argues that "Bata's organization of work and the respective media infrastructure were not typical examples of a disciplinary dispositif of surveillance in the

[33] Zarecor, Kimberly Elman. *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1960*. Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011.

Foucauldian sense, just as they were not a pure application of mechanistic models of management (Taylor, Ford). Bat'a was already partly exceeding the disciplinary mode and moving toward what Deleuze called 'societies of control'. He successfully replaced the factory with the corporation, and the subject of his dispositif was supposed to be mobile in space, flexible in time, highly adaptive to new technologies and techniques, exposed to permanent training and re-training, able to cross borders between traditional spaces of enclosure, and thus became a student (or spectator) at work and a self-sufficient worker at school (or the cinema). At the same time, this regulated emancipation was counterbalanced by new strategies of controlling minds and bodies in a much more precise and extensive way than before, transforming everything into functions of the factory, including families and houses".[34] Szcepanik goes on to describe the Bat'a system as a" highly sophisticated and complex disciplinary system based on precise division of time and space, high specialization, measurement, and surveillance, its main goal being to set everybody at the proper place and rhythm in relation to overall organization of work. At the same time, however, it included certain structural components that exceeded the classical disciplinary mode: it aimed to give everyone a feeling of being a potential share-holder...who did not need to be watched because he watched himself for his own benefit. In this way, even private life and leisure time became functions of the factory, organized and controlled by the company."[35]

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[34] Petr Szczepanik "The Aesthetics of Rationalization: the Media Network in the Bata Company and the Town of Zlín" in Katrin Klingan, ed. *A Utopia of Modernity: Zlín Revisiting Bata's Functional City.* Berlin: Jovis, 2009. Pg.23.
[35] Ibid. pg 207.

Clearly, western scholarship is crucial in order to move past the normative debate that surrounds Bat'a in Czech-language scholarship.[36] In addition to the above mentioned work that offers a fresh perspective on Bat'a, historians' examinations into company towns and state sponsored utopian projects have found that modernization projects' "rational facade barely obscured the oceans of misery, disorder, chaos, corruption and whimsicality that went with it."[37] Their work uncovers the imperfections and the allure of places that were designed to be perfect. By so doing, historians and others have thoroughly dismantled Enlightenment claims that a perfect society can be achieved through technological innovation and rational planning. By connecting Bat'a to their work, we see a global phenomenon occurring during the interwar period: high modernism.

Zlín became Czechoslovakia's outpost of high modernism – which James C. Scott in *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* defined as "a strong, one might even say muscle-bound, version of the self-confidence about scientific and technical progress, the expansion of production, the growing satisfaction of human needs, the mastery of nature (including human nature),

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[36] The work of Max Weber, James C. Scott, Jane Jacobs, Michel Foucault, Detlev Peukert, Stephen Kotkin, David Crew, Tahra Zahra, Richard Stites, Joan Scott, Rogers Brubaker, Gerald Zahavi, Stephen Meyer III, and Mary Neuburger are embedded throughout *Life and Death* Meyer, Stephen. *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908-1921*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981. Scott, Joan Wallach. *Gender and the Politics of History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. Neuburger, Mary. *The Orient Within: Muslim Minorities and the Negotiation of Nationhood in Modern Bulgaria*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004. Zahavi, Gerald. *Workers, Managers, and Welfare Capitalism: The Shoeworkers and Tanners of Endicott Johnson, 1890-1950*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988. Zahra, Tara. *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.

[37] Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

and above all, the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws."[38] Scott traced the long-term Enlightenment project of making citizens legible through the standardization and rationalization of weights, measures, maps and laws from the early modern to the modern period to connect the rise of modernity to a drive for greater legibility. He pointed to the utopian projects of Brasilia, Soviet collectivization, villagization in Tanzania and The Great Leap Forward as high water marks for a utopian mentality that sought to order humanity according to the fuzzy logic of modernism. Understandably, Scott viewed these utopian schemes with horror, as they led to unusable city spaces, famine, and wide scale environmental devastation. The top-down rationalization of the built environment has been a dramatic failure. Instead of high-modernist planning concepts, Scott argued, planners needed to use local knowledge, referred to by Scott as metis, when designing cities.

Curiously, Scott did not delve into the model company towns of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. "While factories and forests might be planned by private entrepreneurs, the ambition of engineering whole societies was almost exclusively a project of the nation-state."[39] Focusing on the state, Scott located utopian corporate projects outside of the modern era. In fact, he suggests that corporate schemes for social engineering have become and are becoming the new threat to the metis, while government has increasingly become a defender for the local. Thus, there is a false dichotomy in Scott's seminal book; states' social engineering projects and those of big

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[38] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed.* New Haven: Yale Press, 1999, pg 5.
[39] Scott, pg 91.

business are presented as asynchronous, though with roughly the same deleterious effects. Yet, as has been well documented, the massive social engineering projects that Scott discusses were intimately connected to company towns in the modern era. Consider the towns of the Endicott-Johnson factory in New York, Ford's Highland Park in Michigan and Fordlandia in Brazil, Siemen's Siemenstadt in Germany, and Olivetti's Aosta Valley in Italy, where companies spent massive amounts of money and time trying to implement a scientific organization of factory and society.[40]

Placing Bat'a in the discussion of high modernism suggests that it too operated under an ethos which produced gross overreach, environmental devastation, and an aesthetic of rationalization. It also connects Bat'a's Zlín with the people of Highland Park, Johnson City, Siemenstadt, Magnitogorsk and Fordlandia, to name but a few, which puts forward that in the interwar period, a significant number of people shared a global experience by living in environments built with a similar logic. Of course, these company towns varied widely according to their contexts; Magnitogorsk, for example, was far more brutal, haphazard, and politically motivated than Zlín.[41] Yet these towns had remarkable similarities, as authorities strove to manage everyday life according to the principles of rationalization, their citizens often had more in common with each other than with the life-worlds of their capital cities. The resulting city-scapes had something

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[40] Greg Grandin. *Fordlandia*. New York: Picador, 2010. Gerald Zahavi. *Workers, Managers, and Welfare Capitalism: The Shoeworkers and Tanners of Endicott Johnson, 1890-1950*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988. Patrizia Bonifazio, and Paolo Scrivano. *Olivetti Builds: Modern Architecture in Ivrea : Guide to the Open Air Museum*. Milano: Skira, 2001.

[41] Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism As a Civilization*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

that Jane Jacobs, among many others, found to be a flattening of diversity and a "mask of pretended order."[42]

Yet with all of these plans there existed a mixed experience of utopia and dystopia. Bat'a's city also provided remarkably high wages for its workers, and an impressive array of social services found in company built hospitals, schools, stadiums, theaters and shopping malls. Employment allowed a largely provincial and poor group of people opportunities for world travel, greater material wealth, and education. These facts call for a nuanced approach when discussing the social environment of Zlín. Jay Winter's work on "minor utopias" seems to apply to Zlín in the Bat'a era as equally as Scott's critique of the excesses of high modernism. Winter looked to people such as Albert Kahn, the global financier and passionate advocate of world peace, to balance postmodern condemnations of the utopian dreamers of the 20th Century. Focusing on people who fought for a range of utopian goals, such as universal human rights and world peace, Winter argues that their stories represent another way of looking at the twentieth century, not only as a series of disasters, but also as a century filled with people who "tried in their separate ways to imagine a radically better world...who configured limited and much less sanguinary plans for partial transformations of the world."[43] Bat'a certainly fits in with such people. His idealism never waned. In fact, he set about trying to create a city that would realize the dreams of the Garden City movement and transform a small Moravian

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[42] Jane Jacobs. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House, 1961. Pg. 21.
[43] Jay Winter, *Dreams of Peace and Freedom: Utopian Moments in the Twentieth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006. pg 1-2.

town into an American styled industrial paradise.[44] Doing so required revolutionizing the culture of his homeland, a place that gave little hint that it could nurture such a project.

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To explore individuals in the operating system of Bataism, I have utilized a wealth of sources, some of which have never been used. [45] The sources that are the most familiar to Bat'a scholars are from the Bat'a Archives in the unfortunately named "Moravian Regional Archive in Brno's work-place Zlín". Here, a tremendous wealth of material that ranges from employee personnel cards to private memos between executives to statistics, photographs, and the complete collection of company publications awaits the scholar. Slightly outside of Zlín, I worked at the Regional Archive of Zlín – mostly in the Archive of the City of Zlín. There, I went through a great number of police files, city council minutes, unpublished memoirs, and various municipal records. I supplemented these archival materials with everything I could find on Bat'a at the National Archive in Prague, which uncovered a fascinating and uneasy relationship between authorities in Prague and the company. Finally, for the chapter on the New York World's Fair, I used the NYWF archive at the New York Public Library. These sources provided a thorough,

[44] Baťa, Tomáš. *Úvahy a projevy: svazek I., mé začátky*. Zlín: A. Cekota, 1932.

[45] I have borrowed Terrence McKenna's notion of culture as operating system. I use this metaphor to create a phenomenology of rationalization. While it may seem anachronistic to apply such computer terminology to describe a culture in the interwar period, I would argue that the development of the computer, and especially its conceptualization, was made possible through the rationalization of industry and government during the period. In fact, the structures of the Bat'a Company, in its language, organization, and goals correspond not only symbolically with the modern computer, but exemplify the mentalité from which the computer would be invented.

yet, as always, incomplete, view into the lives of a wide cross section of people who encountered Bataism.

What follows uses these sources to significantly undermine the grand narratives of Bat'a and Czechoslovakia in the interwar period that historians, journalists, and politicians have constructed over the last eight decades. By accessing the experiences of a wide range of people through a variety of sources, this dissertation explores the limits of action in a rationalizing milieu in order to uncover the experiences of a broad spectrum of people in Zlín. Using Max Weber's query into rationalization, "How is it at all possible to salvage *any remnants* of 'individual' freedom of movement *in any sense* given this all-powerful trend?"[46] - and by "this" Weber meant rationalization: standardization, time-centered work, the assembly-line, etc. - Life and Death in the Kingdom of Shoes explores management, youth, gender, crime, nationalism, and ends with an account of the company at the outset of the Second World War. By doing so, it makes a three-fold contribution.

Firstly, Bat'a must be seen as a crucial example of corporate high modernism. The Bat'a story reveals the strengths and weaknesses of a global movement, what can best be termed welfare capitalism, and the processes that ushered in the modern age. The historian Jan Bunčík even described Bat'a as "one of the central institutions through which modernization is implemented and from which it is disseminated."[47] Yet Bata-ism remains unique in that it was highly influenced by ideas of communal-ism, and came

[46] P. Lassman and R. Speirs, ed/trans. *Weber: Political Writings.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). pg 159.
[47] Jan Bunčík. "Nad niektorými otázami teórie modernizáce." *Sociológia* 34, 2002, no.2.p.100.

from a place where the Communist Party won the local elections after World War One. It is unique in that it represents one the most complete attempts at welfare capitalism in Europe, and as a result of its specific context. Bataism became an ideology and a way of life. Chapter one looks at the mechanisms the company put into place overtime in order to cultivate its managerial aesthetic. We see both a logical escalation of methods of surveillance from the 1920s to the late 1930s as well as a noticeable amplification in social engineering after the death of Tomas Bat'a in 1932. By following the evolution of the biggest event in the Bat'a calendar, Mayday, and the creation of the personnel department, the chapter outlines the ways in which the company tried to mold its workforce into an ideal of efficiency. The company ideal had many similarities with the business culture we know today; its clean-shaven, suit-wearing managers were a key vessel for the spread of a modern masculine aesthetic.

Secondly, one of my primary revisions is to suggest that life in the First Republic was not only dominated by nationalist concerns but by the conflicts and cooperation brought about by corporate attempts to rationalize everyday life. With the Bat'a Company in the vanguard, businesses in Czechoslovakia implemented a new way of working, shopping, and living, which brought about intense debates over the future of the country, oftentimes creating cross-national solidarity. Rationalization, in fact, pitted company men against an array of interest groups, such as hand manufacturers, communists, bar owners, and traditionalists while bringing a radical change to Czechoslovakia. Chapter 5 posits that national belonging was not an ideal for the Batamen, who championed international identification, but rather an obstacle as well as a tool for increasing worker loyalty. The

rationalization of industry becomes a far more important process in the modern history of Czechoslovakia than national conflicts, which appear peripheral. Rather than uncover conflicts between nationalists, my research found conflicts and between workers and managers, men and women, political parties, and traditionalists and modernizers. Furthermore, national and racial differences became crucial only after the Munich Agreement of March, 1938. After which, the company began taking a more active interest in the nationality of their workforce, and nationalist incidents began to occur with much greater frequency in Bata stores throughout Europe.

The last chapter further illustrates the complicated and often ad hoc nature of company cosmopolitanism and national identification by providing a detailed account of Bat'a's dealings at the 1939 New York World's Fair (NYWF). The chapter reveals the high-water mark for the company in Czechoslovakia, when key personnel came to hold high-ranking positions in the Second Republic of Czecho-Slovakia, and the incidents which led to the loss of that position. The saga of the company at the NYWF helps to elucidate how the Nazi invasion led to Bat'a's attempt to transplant corporate headquarters to the United States. As is described in detail, this attempt failed due to a variety of circumstances and personalities, most noticeably the behavior of Jan Bat'a. Bat'a at the NYWF shows how chaotic the company's move to the Americas really was, and how Bataism came to be abandoned in Czechoslovakia in favor of nationalism.

Thirdly and most importantly, Life and Death in the Kingdom of Shoes shows that the Bat'a Company created a society of control, but it was a society which was subverted and negotiated with on a daily basis, by a wide variety of characters. Focusing

on women particularly complicates our understanding of the system. Chapter two explores what life was like for the wives and women workers within the system. Uncovering the entrenched policies of wage differential, the pregnancy policy, and varied experiences of women in Zlín, I find an implicit paradox in the Bat'a ideology, which held that women should be liberated from work, while making work the unifying principle of society, the linchpin of existence. Women's work at home was seen as drudgery, while men's work was championed as honorable. Thus, by presenting women's work as an inconvenience, women were outside of the Bat'a celebration of work. Though women worked their entire productive lives with the company, female factory laborers were always outside of the ideal Bat'a family, and they faced constant reminders of this in unequal pay, slow to nonexistent promotion, and a daily rhetoric that their place was not in the factory. Also discussed is the much stronger focus on the woman as a customer; indeed, production and advertising were significantly geared more towards the female consumer than the male. This meant far more shoes and shoe styles for a woman's feet, more advertisements with females, and a company working to please the women of Europe. The irony that a rigidly male-dominated company put most of its efforts into pleasing women consumers while holding them back at the workplace seemed to go unnoticed. In addition, the chapter offers an insight into sexual relations by following the reports of city and company authorities and investigating their tools for controlling women's bodies, such as banishment, inspection, denunciation, and dismissal. By following the private lives of individuals across the social spectrum, we also see the

limits to the utopian project in instances of wild parties, illicit affairs, prostitution, and abortion.

Likewise, in Youth and Education in Zlín, we see the company's attempt to create a new industrial society and the complicated results of that attempt. Following students' experiences, the chapter shows that being young in the kingdom of shoes was markedly different from other parts of Czechoslovakia, where nationalists competed for children's allegiance and education was rarely centered on the needs of modern industry. Through the experiences of the Young Men and Women in the Bat'a School of Work, we see the effects of an unprecedented network of surveillance as well as the unparalleled opportunities the company offered to mostly lower class Czechoslovaks. In addition, we see how company demands on students changed over the interwar period to match the company's changing approach to social engineering.

The growth of a company run educational system that strove to refit man for a modern industrial lifestyle paralleled a company directed modernization and rationalization of the police force. As chapter 4, Crime and Punishment in Bat'a's Zlín points out, upon taking control of the town in 1923 the company began to use the municipal police to help create its industrial utopia by tracking political undesirables, following people's private lives, and enforcing otherwise rarely used morality laws. The company also organized its own policing apparatus; the Social Department and later the much more invasive Personnel Department, which sent inspectors all over the Bat'a world to report on the private affairs of employees. Using these reports, we see an organization becoming obsessed with the intimate details of its members and convinced

of the belief that modern methods of control, such as surveillance, informants, behavioral incentives, and precise record-keeping could bring about a change in man's character. Yet while following the creation of this system of discipline, we also see how criminality was a bi-product of modernization. For, as the town's population mushroomed, so too did its criminals and spaces for what the company viewed as immorality to occur.

The experiences of people interacting with the Bat'a system, with rationalization, from the Company's executives to those on its furthest periphery, from the sycophants to the critics, are brought to light here in order to excavate a society largely covered in the political fallout after World War Two. It was a society that did not work in lockstep, no matter how organized work and social life came to be. Thus, I argue that Bat'a was able to manufacture consent by providing its workforce with material goods and security, but in turn expected them to forgo democracy both at work and in society for technocratic order. However, this negotiation was at all times challenged and imperfect. Indeed the very threats the company was so concerned about were often the by-products of industrialization, such as high numbers of women in the workforce, drifters coming into town to beg and look for work, and increased opportunities for perceived moral transgressions. Therefore, the stories that follow offer an important voice to our ongoing discussion of modernity by illustrating the multi-directional paths that modernization opened, which offer no easy reading of the history of Zlín in the interwar period.[48]

[48] The multi-directional path of modernity seems best illustrated to me by the rise of the Nazi Party. Detlev Peukert's and David F. Crew's discussion of the "pathologies of modernity" influence my approach toward Bat'a. Peukert Crew, David F. 1992. "The Pathologies of Modernity: Detlev Peukert on Germany's Twentieth Century". *Social History.* 17, no. 2: 319-328.

Chapter 2: Only the Clean are Strong: Bataism and the Grooming of the Modern Manager

Figure 1.1: A Bat'a salesman speaks with the store manager while a customer makes a decision.[49]

THE BAT'A BIOPOLITIC

"I found out during a visit to Napajedla last Friday that the head of the sales department, Nedbalek, was unshaven. Write this on his card!" Jan Bat'a to Vincenc Jaroněk, March 7, 1938.[50]

[49] Fotoarchiv, MZA-ZLÍN. K29 č1227. (Date Unknown)

As the introduction's description of the Bat'a Mayday of 1937 suggests, over the course of the interwar era, the Bat'a Company steadily strengthened conception and enforcement of a company biopolitic.[51] From an informal organization centered around personal relationships and profitability at the beginning of the 1920s, the company steadily moved toward a highly regulated system and fully legible workforce, where employees' lives were to be opened, read, and further investigated if the bosses so chose. In other words, the intense interest on the part of company executives into how employees looked and lived made Zlín on the cutting edge of high modernism. Following the rationalizing dreams of company founder, Tomas, Bat'a in the early 1930s began issuing every employee a "personnel card," sent personal inspectors on regular investigations of employees' houses, and had over two hundred company informants reporting on the political habits of their neighbors in Zlín.[52] The project was an attempt to remake society into an efficient, machine-like organism with no interpersonal conflicts (or beards) and harmonized to the rhythms of production. Of course, this project was beholden to the highly subjective values of its engineers, (a.k.a. top management) who were eager to change the moral attitudes and physical appearances of employees into what they saw as quintessentially modern. From fat, drunk, and dirty Moravians, which is at least how Tomas and his half-brother Jan perceived them, the Bat'a company would

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[50] MZA-ZLÍN. Osobní Odděleni. K1020 č.49

[51] Throughout this work, I use James C. Scott's definition of high modernism, "a strong, one might even say muscle-bound, version of the self-confidence about scientific and technical progress, the expansion of production, the growing satisfaction of human needs, the mastery of nature (including human nature), and above all, the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws." Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998, p.4. The definition of biopolitics is taken from Michel Foucault who uses it to refer to the various ways governments control the bodies of their populations. Foucault and Michel Senellart. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1978-79*. Basingstoke [England]: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

[52] MZA-ZLÍN. K 1029 č.14. The number of paid informants from 1936-1940 is listed at 231. Yet, it is highly likely that this is only a fraction of the total number of informants used throughout the interwar period.

make athletic, sober, and almost obsessively clean standardized men capable of going anywhere in the world to turn a profit.

Nowhere was the Bat'a attempt at making the modern man more concentrated than with the manager. Riddled with contradiction, managers by 1938 were expected to be uniformed renaissance men, flexible enough to adapt to different cultures and yet bound to a strict way of being in the world. They were to be clean-shaven in pressed clothes. They were to be married men. They were expected to be better than their employees at almost any task, from flying aircraft to charming peasant women into buying shoes, while at all times *looking like* modern company men. For how they looked was as equally important as to how they acted. The heads of the Bat'a Company expected their managers to conform to a company image, which was outspokenly cosmopolitan and intensely "modern".[53]

This was an image at odds with the popular Czechoslovak idea of Moravia as a bastion of traditionalism, where everyone supposedly went around in folk costumes from bucolic village to village.[54] Instead, the Batamen played a major role in the fashioning of Czechoslovaks, by both bringing local employees in-line with the Bat'a aesthetic, as well as modeling for the larger community what it meant to look and act modern. For, just as Bat'a shoes grew synonymous with the modern lifestyle, as they were relatively cheap, sleek, and easily replaceable, its managers came to be seen by both the company and society at large as representatives of how to live this lifestyle. And, as the brand came to

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[53] As Michel Foucault theorized, one of the key differences between modern and pre-modern experiences has been states' interest in controlling its subjects bodies. Foucault argued that from the 18th century onward, "an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations" took place throughout the continent. The Bat'a Company too was interested in controlling its bodies. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol.1: The Will to Knowledge*. London: Penguin. 1998.

[54] For a good example of Moravian stereotypes in the interwar period see Luboš Ptáček, *Nacionalismus a film, Morava ve filmu : sborník příspěvků z konference Nacionalismus a film*. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, Filozofická fakulta, 2002.

be viewed throughout the world as an "acme of modernity," its managers became flag-bearing pioneers with smiling faces who ran stores with machine-like efficiency and brought the natives into the clean well-shod future.[55] Of course, in reality managers behaved according to the unstable whims of the human soul; they were just as likely to sleep with their employees as to raise them to the supposed higher standards of the company's philosophy. Still, the Bat'a attempt to fashion modern management in both action and appearance followed a move from a system that encouraged innovation and sought to lower walls between workers and managers, instilling a familial piety, into a codified, highly regularized structure of personnel management; a transition which demanded managers become avatars of a new age.

As we shall see, for managers to become such embodiments of modernity, they were asked to be agents of surveillance, efficiency, and standardization. In short, their development is a part of the larger "rationalization" process that was going on throughout the world at the time.[56] Thus, they were agents of Taylorism, striving to reduce all unnecessary movement in the workplace and Fordism, seeking to guarantee a consistency from one store to the next throughout the world. They even adopting Ford's Midwestern values of abstinence and self-restraint, and collectivism, tying all participants of the system into one metaphorical body.

Simultaneously, the company demanded that managers be above political and national struggles, and asked them to put "work" above political interests in the goal of efficiency, and putting customers above national chauvinism. The Bataman was remarkably flexible to political change.[57] This political flexibility allowed a relatively

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[55] *Time.* "Czechoslovakia: Bat'a." October 8, 1928.
[56] Certainly, Max Weber's work on rationalization informs my study throughout.
[57] Scott, Seeing Like a State. Pg 5.

smooth transition into the Nazi occupation, into very different cultural contexts, and, though outside of the scope of this project, into the postwar era as well. These were the often contradictory impulses of the Bat'a aesthetic, which managers encountered and embraced in a variety of ways and with varying emphasis. In the end, Bat'a managers were supposed to be the vanguard of modern welfare capitalism.[58] In league with numerous other transnational welfare capitalist projects happening at the same time, Bat'a managers were agents for rationalization, working to enhance control over their employees' lives, while at the same time subject to the company's strict rules of behavior and action. They were both the architects and the models for the modernization of everyday life.[59]

THE BAT'A MANAGER IN HISTORIOGRAPHY

As of 2010, the only significant analysis of the Bat'a managerial ideology has been by Stanislav Holubec and Ondřej Ševeček, who have used the insights of Michel

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[58] Welfare capitalism throughout this work refers to a business philosophy in which a company controls an area, usually a town, and provides almost all necessities for its employees and their families. Global businesses in the welfare capitalist milieu took just as intense an interest in their subjects as did modern states, in many instances going beyond the regulatory strictures of the government to regulate the routines of their workforce. Generally, the term has been divided between definitions: American welfare capitalism as seen in the company towns throughout North America, and European welfare capitalism as seen in the mixed economies of European states. However, while instances of industrial paternalism are abundant in the American context, they are by no means restricted geographically to the United States. There is an epoch of global corporate empires with company controlled towns sprouting up across the world, often posing significant problems for individual states. It is a legacy that continues into today. Throughout this work I use the term welfare capitalism to refer to company controlled towns and other spaces. For a good discussion of the history of welfare capitalism in America, see Stuart Brandes, *American Welfare Capitalism, 1880-1940*, University of Chicago Press, 1976. On the development of welfare capitalism in Europe, see David F. Crew, *Germans on Welfare: From Weimar to Hitler*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

[59] A few examples of welfare capitalist biopolitics can be found in Greg Grandin, *Fordlandia*. New York: Picador, 2010. Gerald Zahavi, *Workers, Managers, and Welfare Capitalism: The Shoeworkers and Tanners of Endicott Johnson, 1890-1950*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988. Stephen Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908-1921*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981.

Foucault to connect the Bat'a program with larger social engineering projects stemming from the Enlightenment. Both historians' work has helped in moving the discussion from normative apologies and their opposing diatribes to a contextualizing of the Bat'a phenomenon in the tumultuous interwar period. Looking from two different angles, neither seeks to condemn or praise the Bat'a project but connect it to the larger utopian spirit of modernism. Yet, while both look to Foucault to provide a theoretical base, neither seem to be interested in the managerial ideal as it changed over time. Thus, while Ševeček does a remarkable job following the change and continuities of the built environment of Zlín, we have little sense as to how the managerial ideology *moved* through the interwar period and little sense as to how managers lived, thought, and acted under Bataism.

Holubec, meanwhile, locates Bat'a ideology between Protestant ethics learned from the United States, a strong drive to regulate the corporate body very much in-line with nationalist and socialist collectivist ideas, and the modernizing paternalism of the Italian fascists.[60] Indeed, all three influences were immensely important in the making of the Bat'a manager. Yet Holubec presents these three influences as being equal throughout the interwar period; an unchangeable package originating with Tomas and carried into the next decade fully intact. He also does not look beyond official proclamations by the two heads of the company in his analysis, as he clearly has not researched the types of books that made required reading for managers or the actual experiences of managers on the ground. As a result, he presents the Bat'a world, particularly the top management, as a uniform group that offered little resistance to the ideas of the boss. There are no gray areas in Holubec's account, no complexity within the system itself. Indeed, reading

[60] Stanislav Holubec, "Silní milují život. Utopie, ideologie a biopolitika baťovského Zlína." Kuděj 2009/2 pg 30-55.

Holubec, one would have little sense as to the prevalence of the contradictions in the daily lives of those living within the Bat'a empire, the push and pull between the wider Czechoslovak context and their duties as Batamen. Furthermore, the three major influences of collectivism, Americanism, and fascism had different moments of prominence; for example, Americanism waxes and wanes as the company becomes a major competitor with other American shoe manufacturers. Holubec also leaves out the gentlemanly aspect of the Bat'a manager, for a fourth influence, that of the English gentleman also played a significant role in the framing of the ideal Bataman. Hence, Holubec has produced a rather brilliant outline of the ideological underpinnings of the Batamen but we still have little sense as to how Bat'a ideology was a process, a thing constantly being constructed and contested.

Ševeček, on the other hand, chronicles the socio-spatial shifts that occurred over the interwar period in Zlín by meticulously going through the types of workers' housing being built from 1918 to 1939 in order to ground the lofty claims of the company, as well as contemporary accounts that continue these myths, in the physical realities of the people of Zlín. Ševeček's findings challenge the company's myth that its workers lived in single family houses. Rather, the vast majority of workers, who were single and in their twenties, lived in dormitories under strict supervision. He furthers the revision of the perception of interwar Zlín as monolithic by comparing daily life on the main town square to the highly ordered life at Bat'a controlled sites, "its specific, pluralistic social atmosphere, which represented a sociologically important corrective for the somewhat one-sided urbanization."[61] His analysis of the built environment details the evolution of management housing as well. From its earliest company housing project "Letna", the

[61] Ševeček, Ondřej. *Zrození Baťovy průmyslové metropole: továrna, městský prostor a společnost ve Zlíně v letech 1900-1938*. České Budějovice: Veduta, 2009. Pg 54.

company built the "privileged quarter Nad Ovčírnou in which mainly high-quality single-family homes for managers and high-ranking employees were concentrated." From the beginning, then, managers were set apart from the workers.

However, Ševeček finds that white collar and blue collar workers actually grew closer together in material wealth after the company's rapid expansion, "by far the most common type of company housing was the two-unit home. As builders expanded the prevalence of this design, differences between workers' and clerks' housing (visible earlier in the first stage of the Letna project) started to disappear. Bat'a's garden districts thus gradually acquired a markedly homogeneous appearance."[62] This homogeneity did not extend to upper management, though, since, according to Ševeček, the 1930s witnessed a move by the directors away from company housing altogether, even though by 1939 the company could offer 60 large and 289 smaller single-unit homes, and into opulent villas. Hugo Vavrečka, Josef Hlavníčka, Dominik Čipera, Ladislav Malota, all ordered remarkable private villas.[63] Thus we see an interesting movement where clerks and workers come to inhabit the same types of spaces, while upper management becomes increasingly remote, living in "castles" away from their employees. For Ševeček, the changes in spatial organization provide evidence for the increasing power of company officials within Czechoslovakia as a whole, and indeed during the brief Second Republic of Czecho-Slovakia (1938-1939) when several Bat'a officials worked as government ministers. He also remarks on a shift toward a more elitist stance on the part of top management.

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[62] Ibid. pg 50.

[63] Ondřej Ševeček, "Socio-spatial Aspects of Zlin's Urbanization" *The Bata Phenomenon: Zlin Architecture 1910-1960* (Regional Gallery of Fine Arts: Zlin) 2009.

While Ševeček connects changing spatial organizations to broader changes in Czechoslovakia, he says little about the making of the ideal Bat'a manager, or, like Holubec, the managers themselves. My work adds to their insights by looking at the manager over time. For the manager during the 1920s was supposed to be a hardworking, sober, man of the people, a man whose education was much less important than his work ethic. He was encouraged to be inventive; in fact, making improvements to production was the quickest way to promotion. After the dramatic expansion of the company and the onset of the Great Depression, however, a noticeable codification and specialization occurs to the manager. The company comes to see training future leaders as paramount, and rather than hiring talented people from the outside they built an in-house training program for the most promising students. In addition, the manager's desired scope of expertise dramatically expanded; as we shall see, by the late 30s they were expected to know how to fly aircraft, dance, ride horses, and speak in multiple languages. Of course, these two managerial ideals pre- and post-Depression had much in common with each other, as both were intimately connected to the paternalistic industrial discourse of welfare capitalism. Yet the shift in managerial expectations dovetailed with the expansion of the company throughout the world, suggesting that the globalization of the company necessitated an expansion of its requirements, for, as managers were sent further and further afield, the company grew increasingly concerned with their control. Furthermore, as the company changed leadership from Tomas to Jan, the utopian drive to create the quintessential modern man strengthened, as Jan was considerably more interested in the socio-political possibilities of the Bat'a system in the world at large. As a result, managers became increasingly scrutinized and regulated, even as they were being sent to places far from the watchful eyes of company agents.

What follows is an exploration into the making of the Bat'a manager in both actions and appearances in order to connect the Bat'a project with a much larger discourse on grooming and modernity. The scholarly discourse on modernity and appearance has examined how the look of modernity emerged from a complex set of ideals of cleanliness, efficiency, and fashion from Bulgaria to Indonesia. The end result was someone that everyone recognizes today, the suit-wearing clean-shaven man with a careful haircut, watch, and polished shoes. This aesthetic was by no means inevitable but the result of a complicated process of self-discipline and disciplining, and the rise of department stores, mass media, and the fashion industry.[64] The Bat'a case provides strong evidence of how corporations aggressively enforced this character onto their managers and workers, giving us an inside look at the disciplining mechanisms that made the modern man.

The often arbitrary, coercive, and highly contextual experiences of the Bat'a managers illuminate their construction and modification of themselves. With executives and managers on all five continents, the company came to rely on a written set of rules for its management, while simultaneously tightening informal codes of conduct to discipline and mold their managers into highly idealized company men who were required to increasingly control not only worker productivity but the movement, appearance, and personalities of the workers. Ultimately, we see men act as spies, misbehave, act as cosmopolitan moderns, and as collaborators in a project to mold men

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[64] For a general overview of the origins of the business suit see, Farid Chenoune. *A History of Men's Fashion*. Paris: Flammarion, 1993. For suits, see Carole Turbin, "Fashioning the American Man: The Arrow Collar Man, 1907–1931". *Gender & History*, 14: 470–49. Christopher Breward, "Fashioning Masculinity: Men's Footwear and Modernity", in Benstock, Shari, and Suzanne Ferriss. *Footnotes: On Shoes*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2001.

into an aesthetic of efficiency and rationality, all the while participating in a utopian project that paid well.

Figure 1.2: Tomas Bat'a giving a speech commemorating the death of Tomas Edison in a morning coat and bowler hat on October, 21, 1931.[65]

THE ŠEF AND BAT'A MANAGEMENT FROM 1918-1932

"Speak briefly." T. Bat'a, 1926[66]

Tomas Bat'a was an exceptionally successful industrialist who went outside of his immediate context to embrace new ways of manufacturing material and employees. His

[65] Fotoarchiv MZA-ZLÍN K1 č.4.
[66] "The Ten Commandments of Saving Time", Sdělení, Jan. 2, 1926, pg 3.

life is a story of adaptability and adoption: adoption of largely American methods, and adaptability to the ever-changing economic and political situation of Central Europe. Within the company his life became the yardstick with which to measure all other managers, and his maxims came to be taken as gospel-like truth. This became especially true after his death in a plane crash in 1932, when the Batamen created a long-lasting cult of personality around him. Thereafter they memorized his quotes, which were also frequently painted on walls around town, and were constantly reminded of his legacy through a barrage of stories about him, and by him, in the press. In addition, they, as all people in Zlín passed by František Gahura's impressive public memorial to him daily, which overlooked the factory. In short, by the late 1930s the company compared Tomas Bat'a with Tomas Masarýk, the founder and first President of the Republic of Czechoslovakia, men who willed a backward region to greatness and whose characters created the mold for the "new industrial man".[67] A significant if overlooked part of this legacy was his appearance. For, while becoming the key representative of the Czech "self-made-man" Tomas also became a vehicle for how that man should look.

He certainly would not look like his father, Antonín Bat'a, who was a cobbler who would often disappear for weeks on end, fathered seven children with three different women, and was known for his card playing. Perhaps as the result of his father's negative influence, Tomas developed a socially conservative outlook marked by abhorrence for frivolity, idleness, and intoxication. He founded, funded, and continuously championed Zlín's temperance movement from 1918 till his death: organizing the "Abstinence Club" in 1925, battling new liquor licenses in his position as mayor, and forbidding any alcohol in company spaces. For Bat'a, the smoky pub represented local backwardness, the lazy

[67] "Character Traits of the New Industrial Man." Conference of the Personnel Department, November 29,1937. K. 1010 č.10 MZA-ZLÍN.

Moravian past.[68] His propagandists routinely associated political rivals with alcohol and the company paper printed dozens of articles a year from 1918 until 1932 from key abstinence figures in the United States, such as the evangelist Reverend W.A. Sunday.[69] Likewise, Tomas frowned upon workers spending free time pursuing what he considered frivolous entertainment, such as jazz concerts and card playing. For him, happiness was in work and struggle. For him, work was the salvation of man.

Along with this focus on sobriety, Tomas championed a simple, and to him, rationalized approach to dress. In an article entitled "How to Dress at Work" the company told workers "practical and efficient" bested any type of overly done style.[70] For the interwar context, this meant that managers should wear the short suit, rather than a frock coat, and women should wear long blouses.[71] The masculine ideal was fast becoming tied to the aestheticization of modern industry. In the 1920s a key part of this aestheticization was efficiency, which became a mantra that permeated the factories. "Be quick," one article reminded readers.[72] Another slogan painted on factory walls was "the day has 86,400 seconds."[73] Clearly, dress and style had to have the appearance of efficiency. Of course, putting on a tie and suit and shaving daily is not at all the most efficient way to prepare for work. Of course, this trend toward short suit and straight razor was embedded in a much larger movement in the fashion and business world that

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[68] Examples of Bat'a's fight against alcohol abound throughout the 1920s in the company paper, license records and criminal records, one clear statement of Bat'a's attitude toward alcohol can be found in "Alkohol a Obec," *Sděleni*, June 14, 1924.
[69] *Sdělení* and *Zlín*, 1918-1933.
[70] "Jak se oblekáme do práce?" *Sdělení* Sept. 18, 1926.
[71] Nicholas Antongiavanni, *The Suit*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006. Geraldine Biddle-Perry and Sarah Cheang. *Hair: Styling, Culture and Fashion*. Oxford: Berg, 2008.
[72] "Buď rychlý." *Sdělení* Feb. 5, 1928.
[73] Vilém Vesely. *600 Hesel Baťa*. Tisk: Zlín. 1938

modeled the style of the modern man, whose life was to be rationalized and mechanized. This particular aesthetic demanded that men spend much more time on their upkeep.

The path to this aesthetic began for Bat'a when he went on a trip to buy shoe manufacturing equipment in Germany. It was then that Tomas first realized the incredible advantage of the machine in his field. His love of technology soon brought him to America, where he studied new methods in manufacturing in 1904, 1911, and 1919. His trips brought him into direct contact with the American worker, whom he would later come to idealize as efficient, hardworking and without any animosity toward his employer. On his last trip, he met with Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan and returned to Zlín ever more convinced that the way forward was an adaptation of American methods of manufacturing, employee management, and style. The future of the world lay in the machine, and by 1926, the entire Bat'a factory had become mechanized, with electric powered machines having interchangeable parts and independent platforms (the first shoe factory in the world to do so).[74] In the machine, Tomas, like others in his generation, saw the efficiency his society sorely lacked, and in America he saw the tremendous power of industrial management. He also came to see American style, with its emphasis on the sleek and mass produced as the way forward in shoe production.

Yet while embracing the modern business aesthetic, Tomas and his fellow executive Dominik Cipera developed a unique system of management, which was Bat'a's alone. The company decentralized all business units and set them against themselves. Each unit was responsible for a quota, which was determined by the top management. Management also set levels for the price of needed materials, which established how many products needed to be "sold" either to other units or customers. If the unit exceeded

[74] Anthony Cekota, *Entrepreneur Extraordinary: The Biography of Tomas Bata.* Rome: University Press of the International University of Social Studies, 1968.

these quotas, a percentage of the profit went into the unit's paychecks, with managers getting five to ten percent more than everyone else. Similarly, workers from 1924 on were brought into a profit sharing plan that essentially took a fixed amount out of their paychecks and bought company stock with it. They then earned a guaranteed 10% interest on this not so voluntary investment. Undoubtedly an entrepreneurial genius, Tomas created a network of interdependent sections of a vertically integrated company. In other words, while the company expanded to include every phase of shoe manufacturing, from buying hides to selling shoes, each department competed to outdo the other.[75]

The system bred individual competition and ingenuity. For example, Dominik Čipera, one of the five key executives of the company, claimed that he never received a direct order from Tomas; rather it was up to him to find solutions to problems. Indeed, an overwhelming number of people in leadership positions made it there because of a particularly bright idea on the job. In addition, Bat'a carefully embedded competition into everyday life, from stitching contests to athletic events. Athletic competition took off from 1924, when the local soccer club changed its name from F.K. Zlín to S.K. Bat'a, and the company began to organize an impressive array of sports teams.[76] At work, gaining the highest profits for one's department earned a spot in the local newspaper, and various workplace contests were held throughout the interwar period. One of Tomas' slogans reminded workers, "Struggle- the father of all things."[77]

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[75] Zelený, Milan. *Cesty k úspěchu: trvalé hodnoty soustavy řízení Baťa*. Ve Zlíně: Univerzita Tomáše Bati, Fakulta managementu a ekonomiky, 2001.

[76] By 1928 the company had 6 organized sports teams competing on the international level and could boast of having trained Olympic champion Ladislav Vácha, gold medalist on the uneven bars. *Sdělení*, August 1928 no. 33.

[77] Vilém Vesely. *600 Hesel Baťa*. Tisk: Zlín. 1938

His faith in technology, rationalization, and competition led to the development of a particular masculine ideal in interwar Zlín, its standardized appearance and character. While Zlín came to have more cars per capita than anywhere else in Czechoslovakia, more radios, the largest movie theater in the world, and the highest building in Central Europe, it also became the city of the short suit and shorn manager, where the look and style of the western businessman defined masculinity. However, while Bat'a came to be one of the key corporations that promoted the modern aesthetic, it would not be until after Tomas' death that corporate power would be used to rigorously enforce the company aesthetic.

FAMILY TIES AND REWARDING INNOVATION: THE MANAGER FROM 1918-1933

The manager before the mid-30s was largely chosen because of his, or in rare cases her, ingenuity on the job. There is almost no record of any disciplinary action before 1933 against a manager for his or her appearance, or a desire to manufacture managers through specialized training at a young age. And while the manager was supposed to be an exemplary employee outside of work, living the sober, hardworking, family centered life of Tomas, the company had yet to establish a thorough system of surveillance throughout the town. Overwhelmingly, managers came from the workers' ranks and were of humble background.[78] In addition, at odds with the company's cosmopolitan and promotion-through-ability rhetoric, the top management, those twelve or so individuals who made up the inner circle, were mostly connected to Tomas Bat'a

[78] Though a complete picture of middle management is not possible, a careful study of managers' biographies published in the company newspaper from the years 1936-38 as well as 34 middle managers' personnel cards reveals that nearly two thirds of them began as factory laborers. MZA-ZLÍN Osobní kartoteky.

through family and regional ties. And while some showed remarkable ability, most were valued most for their unquestioned loyalty to the boss.

Dominik Čipera, the man most responsible for putting Bat'a's idea for industrial autonomy into an administrative and accounting system, married Bat'a's niece in 1922. John Hoza, eventually the head of the rubber division, entered into Tomas' service as a teenager before WWI as Tomas' driver and mechanic. Jan was Tomas's younger half-brother, and the Josef Hlavnička, another corporate executive, married Tomas' sister Marie in 1923. Thus we see a company centered on familial piety. Despite claims to the contrary, most managers had no chance of moving into the top circles of the company, as these positions were reserved for men whose loyalty was guaranteed through family or regional connections.[79]

These family connections served to create a heightened sense of solidarity among management and served to present a uniform model of masculinity at the factories. As that model stemmed from Tomas' three piece short suit, clean-shave, and polished shoes, the interrelated upper management came to model the masculine aesthetic at work and in public. There was very little need for aesthetic discipline for top-level managers, as the men self-disciplined their appearances based on the appearance of the paternal figure of Tomas. The rest of the workforce, however, was seen to need more guidance.

[79] Osobní kartotéky. MZA-ZLÍN K.1021, 1023, 1024 č. 13,14.

Figure 1.3: Employees clocking in at the factory gates, 1936.[80]

THE WATCH

The first major implementation of modern discipline was the introduction of the time card system in 1923. Inspired by Endicott-Johnson of New York, which was located in the same place as the Computing Tabulating Recording Corporation (later IBM), which made the time card machines, Bat'a mandated that every employee have a time card. Employees were held responsible for these cards. If lost, the worker faced a fine of 10 crowns. Walking to the factory gates, all employees punched their card before moving

[80] Fotoarchiv. MZA-ZLÍN K.4 č.123.

into the facility. From then on, an employee's time could be accounted down to the minute. Not surprisingly, shortly thereafter, watches became much more commonly advertised in the company press, and it becomes rare to see a company man without a watch after 1926.[81] With the time card, management took a step forward into realizing the demands of Taylorism. It was a step that would be built upon until the Bat'a system had produced one of the most thorough accounting structures for personnel in the world.

In addition to the time cards, the company began issuing instructions to its workforce on how to eat breakfast (a big English style breakfast and a smaller lunch was preferred to the Central European tradition), how to use the telephone ("don't shout!"), what to do on holidays (hike and exercise), and how to raise children.[82] In 1924, the company also outlawed all smoking on the factory grounds, and began to strongly discourage drinking, firing anyone who came to work under the influence and organizing abstinence clubs.[83] The process of bringing workers into the Bat'a aesthetic continued with regular instructions on grooming in the company press, such as why men should not have long hair, and ended with an unwritten but well understood fact that the scruffy did not rise in the ranks of the company.[84]

One of the next most important innovations for the management of the ever growing number of employees was the introduction of personnel cards in 1931. These were paper folders, intended for each full-time employee and meant to provide a running list of their time in the company. Incredibly valuable as historical objects, the cards reveal

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[81] *Sdělení*, this number is taken from a random sample of 100 advertisements in 1923 and 100 in 1927. There are twice as many advertisements for wristwatches in 1927, 13 in 1927 and 6 in 1923.
[82] "Jak řešit snídani." *Zlín*, February 15, 1930. "Strach z Telefonu" *Zlín*, January 9, 1931. "Jak si stráviti dovolenou." *Sdělení*. July 2, 1927.
[83] Bohumil Lehar. *Dějiny Baťova Koncernu, 1894-1945*, (Praha: Státní nakladatelství politické literatury) 1960.
[84] "Dlouhé vlasy". *Sdělení*. July 12, 1924.

extraordinary detail about the workers and managers at Bat'a in the interwar period. They show the dates of when an employee began and stopped working for the company, their religion, languages spoken, family members, debt, what kind jobs they worked over their careers, a yearly, brief, evaluation, and, depending on how long they worked and exceptional they were, and a list of all of their mistakes and successes. Unfortunately, these cards have yet to be thoroughly cataloged, thus, outside of a handful of cards which have attracted archivists' interests, it is almost impossible to get a wide-ranging statistical analysis of employees. Still, the cards point to the institutionalization of behavioral surveillance. As they provided for a way to account for the behavior of all employees, by allowing managers to keep an ongoing file on the behavior and appearance of each employee.

In addition to the personnel cards, managers had to fill out a quarterly evaluation of their employees from 1934. The sales manager, for example, went through a large, one page form, moving across a variety of topics before recommending the next steps for the employee within the company. Comprised of fifteen topics, the evaluation asked about employees' relationship status, their place of residence, living arrangement, children, courses they might have taken for improvement, languages spoken, their salary and expenses (including whether or not they had a car), the amount of their yearly bonus, and finally, an eight part section on their behavior. In this section managers had to decide among four words under each part to describe the employees' "quality of work, performance, behavior, temperament, leadership abilities, creative abilities, and relationship to the factory." Then the manager decided whether the person was "on the rise", "good", "falling", or "fired."[85] These evaluations, unfortunately were not even as

[85] Form for Store Managers. Prodejní Oddělení. 1938. MZA-ZLÍN. K 1506 č.6.

faithfully archived as were the personnel cards, and thus we have precious few such forms that were actually filled out. Still, what was required of the manager reveals a great deal about the increasing influence of industrial psychology on the manager, for, as the above suggests, the company grew increasingly interested in keeping careful track of employees' mood. As with the personnel cards, the quarterly evaluation furthered the company's goal in creating a legible employee, giving managers one more tool with which to examine the lives of their employees and determine whether or not they had the right character for the Bat'a project. These methods of oversight were being increasingly used throughout the world, though more by states than by companies, and would come to be such a routinized way of managing populations that today we hardly pay them notice.[86] Yet, it was not that long ago when an employee had little to no record of his existence with a company, and certainly no record of his or her individual character. Similarly, the use of intelligence tests became widespread around 1934, when nearly every new hire had to take one. These tests ascertained the candidates' abilities at arithmetic, grammar, and writing. Thus, there was a kind of seamlessness in the transition from Tomas to Jan in the way the company steadily increased its interest and technology for surveillance and control over employees.

However, there is also clear evidence that the company became much more interested in social engineering after Jan assumed the reigns of power. After all, the company biopolitic before Jan remained largely based on following the examples of leadership; workers had no formal dress code and managers did not have to be clean-shaven. The codification of the Bataman's appearance came about only after Tomas' fatal plane crash in 1932, when Jan and other top executives put in place a much more

[86] Roy Jacques. *Manufacturing the Employee: Management Knowledge from the 19th to 21st Centuries*. London: Sage Publications, 1996.

comprehensive mechanism for regulating appearances; while at the same time initiating a massive social welfare project and global expansion. Perhaps the most compelling piece of evidence that suggests the company's growing interest in social engineering can be found in the evolution of the Bat'a Mayday.

Figure 1.4: The First Bat'a Mayday, 1924.[87]

REFINING MAYDAY

The first Mayday celebration organized by the company came on the heels of an impressive victory in the municipal elections of 1923, where the "Bat'a Party" won a majority control of the town council of Zlín, which gave the company the right to appoint

[87] Fotoarchiv, MZA-ZLÍN. K. 10 č.443

the mayor. The affair had a distinctly Sunday picnic feel, with guests strolling the grounds of Tomas Bat'a's estate, playing games, eating from a buffet, drinking lemonade (no alcohol was served). Though a damp, chilly day, the event was considered a success, as turnout proved much larger than the Bat'a's expected and people, at least according to Marie Bat'a, Tomas' wife, had a good time.[88] Certainly there was little in the first Mayday that suggested what it was to become, as people came and left as they saw fit. While certainly dressing up for the occasion, employees were given no explicit instructions on what to wear. Photographs of the day show many women in headscarves and a large number of the men in their Sunday suits. Many of them have beards.[89] This was to be a day where management and workers were on equal footing; a day that sought to strengthen the Bat'a family by giving workers the chance to become gentlemen, rubbing shoulders with their bosses, and letting their kids play together. And while the casual nature of the event would soon be replaced by a spectacle of uniformity, certain Mayday practices did become established: the boss made a speech, and the loyalties of employees were put to a test, as just a few hundred meters away the local socialist organizations held their traditional Mayday rally. In fact, the main purpose for the Bat'a celebration was to counteract the influence of the Social Democratic and Communist parties. For, just as the Bat'a Party promised to do away with politics altogether, the Bat'a Mayday promised to turn political rivals' most sacred day into an expression of fidelity to the company.

The next year, the company moved the affair into the streets, organizing the first Bat'a march. Armed with advertising posters, workers marched in a rather ragged group through the town, the women and girls again mostly in traditional Moravian headscarves,

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[88] T. Bat'a, Jr, Tomas Bata: Shoemaker to the World. (Toronto): 1996. pg 23.
[89] Fotoarchiv, MZA-ZLÍN. K. 10.

the men and boys in overcoats and ties. A horse-drawn allegorical float with one of the latest machines for stitching uppers was the largest expense. Certainly, 1925 remained a largely local and casual affair, more akin to a country fair than a modern mass rally.[90] But it would not take long for this loosely organized event to change.

In 1926 the company amplified the Mayday, turning it from a provincial celebration mostly aimed at diffusing the socialist agenda into a focal point for all corners of the Bat'a concern and a platform from which to push the Bat'a name onto the rest of Europe. The expansion of the celebration coincided with a dramatic increase in the production of shoes from 8,785,000 pairs in 1926 to 15,205,000 a year later.[91] Financial success translated into a significant investment into the Mayday of 1926; other departments of the company outside of Zlín were brought in to join the festivities. The sales department of Brno, for example, showed up with a large float of the company's proposed skyscraper, a functionalist design that had stirred up considerable controversy in the city. The day remained, though, more of a celebration than a political rally.

[90] Fotoarchiv. MZA-ZLÍN K10 č.443.
[91] Ševeček. Pg. 60.

Figure 1.5: Labor Square in 1929.[92]

In 1929, marching Boy Scouts and students in matching uniforms from the Bat'a School of Work added a noticeable discipline to the event. Tomas gave a rousing speech on the honor of work, and the Young Men spelled out his initials in front of the main podium. During the parade, workers held banners with Bat'a slogans, something that would become standard for all future Maydays. Yet, as figure 1.5 illustrates, workers were largely free to come and go as they pleased. The celebrations did have speeches by top executives, but the day was devoted to amusements, such as movies, airplane and radio demonstrations, concerts (including three jazz bands and a Roma group), ballet, cabaret, folk dancing, and athletic contests.[93]

[92] Fotoarchiv MZA-ZLÍN K.10 Č.446.
[93] Program Sdělení, April 29, 1926 and April 27, 1929.

Figure 1.6: Labor Square in 1934.[94]

The carnival atmosphere changed significantly once Jan assumed power. The first three Maydays of Jan's tenure highlighted the growing concern of the company in people's appearances, habits, and worldviews. No longer content to have a daylong carnival of sorts, under Jan's leadership the company established Mayday as a rally for Bataism. The event increasingly became a way to propagate the Bat'a political message and flex the company's strength to both the outside world and its employees. Jan's obsession with appearance found a particular outlet in May 1st, "Every employee must

[94] Fotoarchiv. MZA-ZLÍN, K.10 č.448.

have a clean suit for MayDay."[95] As the above photo suggests, company slogans like "we do not fear the future!" had multiplied into the hundreds. Still, as the mildly chaotic nature of the picture suggests, the first two years of Jan's tenure were works in progress. By 1936 and 1937, though, the event rivaled other mass rallies held throughout Europe in precision, population, and expense.

Figure 1.7: A float with Jan's bust with the words "Justice-Education Food-Housing Work" 1936.[96]

By 1937 the company's May Day parade had become the largest in Czechoslovakia, with some fifty thousand participants and at least as many onlookers. It had also become a stirring testament to the company's goal of creating a workforce that

[95] Jan to the division managers ,April 6, 1934. MZA-ZLÍN K.1009 č.7.
[96] Fotoarchiv. MZA-ZLÍN K10 č.450.

matched its aesthetic and managerial philosophies. Modernism, as the Bat'a Company interpreted it, was on full display in the mid to late 1930s as the company neatly organized workers into departments, carefully inspected them for cleanliness, and marched them into Labor Square with military precision. In many ways, 1937-38 was the high-water mark for the Bat'a system.

This was when Jan released his book *We will build a State for 40,000,000,* which marked his ambitions to enter into national politics, the company received over ten thousand applications for its industrial school, and its reach extended to every habitable continent. Jan's book argued for massive public works projects, much like those going on in the United States, Italy, the Soviet Union, and Germany, in order to greatly improve the country's transportation infrastructure and unite a regionally divided state. Jan intended his book for a wide audience, filling it with finely drawn maps and colorful graphs. Written in a simple, direct style, *We will Build a State* marked a dramatic leap onto the national stage for Bata-ism. While not a huge commercial success, the book caught the attention of important figures in Czechoslovak life. For some, like President Benes, the book seemed threatening, for its demand for conscription labor, a change in tax code, and the elimination of regional differences presented a direct challenge to the policies of the Social Democrats and National Socialists. For others, like Rudolf Beran, the book and the company seemed to have solutions for the country's long-standing problems of transportation, unemployment, and ethnic divisions. In 1938, the Bat'a Company cemented its political clout in Czechoslovakia with the appointments of long time general manager and mayor of Zlín, Dominik Čipera as Minister for Public Works and general manager Hugo Vavrečka as Minister-without-portfolio as well as chief commissioner for Czechoslovakia at the 1939 New York World's Fair. In addition, 1937 also saw the commission of the most thorough account of the Bat'a vision, *The Ideal*

Industrial Town of the Future, which, though never published, remains a stunning testament to the principles which guided the company. The company's biopolitic had reached its zenith.

Figure 1.8: Mayday 1937.

The reasons for the shift in social control have much to do with the character of Jan Bat'a. Early in Jan's tenure he began ratcheting up means of social control. In a

memo to managers after taking power, Jan declared, "we will fire anyone in the courtyard without a pass."[97] Jan's desire for control over the workforce was a part of what led him to create the Personnel Department in 1934, which was designed to peer into the private lives of employees, help those that could be helped, and remove disloyal elements. The department coincided with a massive increase in social welfare spending.[98] Moreover, the personnel department was a way of enforcing the Bat'a aesthetic onto an ever-growing workforce.

THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE BAT'A AESTHETIC

"A gram of allegiance is better than a pound of intelligence." Manager's Guidebook, 1938.[99]

The death of Tomas and the emergence of Jan significantly changed the ways in which Bat'a enforced its image. In a speech delivered to upper management in 1937, Jan gave clear evidence of the increasing requirements of managers to actively cultivate the corporate body. Whereas in the past leaders were told to focus on making their team exceed work quotas, by the mid to late 30s they were to

> Follow how people act during the parade on May 1st. Watch how people hold themselves during overtime (at work). Watch those who do not have enough respect and confidence in their personal affairs. In all of these contexts you can put your finger on the unfaithful. It is also worth noting people who ignore or care too much about their appearance. The latter are more superficial. After all, a boy who takes care to groom his eyebrows must not be a man who is a serious thinker.

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[97] Osobní oddělení. MZA-ZLÍN K. 1009 č 7.
[98] Lehar. Pg. 90.
[99] Manager's Guidebook, pg. 6.

> Always take caution with people who have very pretty faces whether they are men or women. They always have a greater tendency toward superficiality than those to whom nature was not so kind.[100]

The message was clear: manage not only at work but at play, and monitor not only productivity but also appearance.

Top executives increasingly wanted this appearance to be average, as average looking people were seen as less of a threat. Thus, managers were told to avoid those who physically or emotionally stood out. Jan's directive to use pseudo-behavioral psychology to find the unfaithful harkened back to the days when fidelity to the Bat'a project was the most important attribute an employee could have. In fact, company demands for absolute loyalty were one of the links that connected Tomas' approach to that of Jan's. Yet how workers' loyalty should be measured, and what lengths the company would go in order to take that measurement, underwent a noticeable shift between the two bosses, from familial piety to a "scientific" approach to loyalty. For during the 1920s, workers' political affiliations, and their work habits, were the main focus of management outside of profitability. Tomas asked managers to monitor employee communist sympathies and signs of alcoholism. As Jan requested his managers to approach with suspicion employees who were beautiful, or those who showed a lack of self-confidence, a significant extension of the company biopolitic was evident. This mentality, which required managers' active participation, led to the greatest excesses of the Bat'a system, for it became a system committed to disciplining nearly every aspect of those in its sphere.

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[100] J.A. Bat'a, lecture to vedoucí. MZA-ZLIN K 1015 č 30. 1937 (exact date unknown).

No other example illustrates the increased scope of the company in everyday life like that of the creation of the personnel inspector. In what is a fitting example of the "dark" and "light" sides of the Bat'a world, the personnel inspectors were meant to be both social workers and company spies. Looking at their work, we can see clearly that a highly personal relationship existed between themselves and the workers. They were perhaps the strongest representatives of the invasive nature of the Bat'a project and its drive to engineer human souls.

Alois Šafařík provides a good example of how the company maintained worker loyalty through its personnel inspectors and it expansive social welfare program. Šafařík, who started working at Bat'a in 1927, transferred from a machine shop in Brno to Zlín in 1934 largely because his wife suffered from bad asthma. When one of the company's personnel inspectors found out about her condition, they gave him 1000 crowns for medicine and doctor visits.[101] After a year of work in Zlín he was also given keys to one of the Bat'a cottages – the two story brick duplexes that still predominate in the town today. In return, Šafařík worked for the company beyond World War II, and remains active in promoting the idea of the Bat'a era as a golden age even today.[102] Šafařík's seemingly mundane story reveals the company's interest in the intimate details of its employees, which allowed Bat'a to win worker's loyalty.

Inspectors' reports confirm Šafařík's experience was not an isolated one. Out of 500 cases that one group of the personnel inspectors handled in 1937, 58% concerned issues over wages and social support. The rest of the cases involved a variety of issues, ranging from marital problems to untidy houses.[103] The inspectors were required to make

[101] Ze vzpomínek baťovce Aloise Šafaříka. http://batastory.net/cs/abs/
[102] Ibid.
[103] Statistics of the Social Inspector. Osobní oddělení. MZA-ZLÍN K.0 č. 37.

frequent visits to workers homes and record their findings. These records are dominated by minute observations, such as to what kind of carpet a worker had chosen for his house or what the state of the shrubs were in the front.[104] Their reports seem obsessed with cleanliness. These meticulous reports on how the workers lived reveal a profound insight into the company's attempts at managing appearance and place. The company in the 1930s came to create a vast network for controlling the appearance of the utopian project of Zlín. Overseeing the project was Vincenc Jaroněk.

Vincenc Jaroněk worked as an accountant for the organization before becoming the first and only head of the personnel department in the interwar period. Employed since 1914, his loyalty was without question when he took the job in 1934. His background lent itself to overseeing all personnel officers; after all, with employees numbering around fifty thousand, one had to be good with numbers.[105] His accountant's mentality left behind a fascinating trail of numbers for the personnel department from 1935 to 1940, after which Jaroněk fled abroad along with many other top managers (unlike most of them, Jaroněk returned to Zlín after the war, becoming a member of the factory's National Council). As Jan outlined for all of the inspectors of the personnel department, Jaroněk was married with children, in his mid-forties and well-groomed. He sported a carefully trimmed mustache and closely cropped haircut.[106] He wore a suit and tie, like all other executives, and, as chief of the burgeoning surveillance network, was to make sure that appearances conformed to Bat'a standards. In one of his first acts on the new job, Jaroněk issued a list of orders to remind company managers that "it pays to

[104] Inspectors' reports can be found under each major department's social services section, these examples come from the personnel inspector for the Sales Department and can be found in Sociální služba prodejní oddělení. MZA-ZLÍN K.0 č.37

[105] Jaroněk's personnel card, MZA-ZLIN K 1023 č.14.

[106] Photographs of Jaroněk can be found in Jaroněk's personnel card. MZA-ZLIN K1023 C14.

watch the employees in the factories and between the factories so that we can find out the behavior and thoughts of those who would live and eat with us...misunderstandings and unaware employees should be brought to an understanding by the personnel officer."[107]

Interestingly, while being the head of the most invasive surveillance apparatus of the company, Jaroněk was held responsible for situations seemingly well beyond his control. In one of the male dormitories in Zlín, for example, Jan Bat'a found several employees sleeping at noon. When asked as to why, they responded that they simply had not been given anything to do. Outraged, Jan insisted that the incident be written on Jaroněk's personnel card, "for not knowing what is going on in our dormitories."[108] Likewise, he was similarly punished for not knowing that for 13 weeks employees in Třebice had not worked the appropriate amount of hours.[109] Given oversight of a group of people directed to peer into the lives of employees, he was held accountable to an impossible expectation of near-omnipotence.

Thus, Bat'a managers came to be both agents and targets of an ever widening surveillance net. Meanwhile, the company aggressively expanded throughout the world, sending thousands of managers into exotic locations. And though away in the world, the manager remained beholden to the modern aesthetic of the company. From thatched roofs to sumptuous department stores, the manager needed to look the same. The high-modernist internationalism of the company required similarity in various contexts in order for its dream of interchangeability to be achieved. Thus, the transnational Bataman was supposed to look beyond national difference in order to standardize the experience of

[107] Jaroněk to personnel inspectors, Osobní Oddělení, February 11, 1935 MZA-ZLIN K 1009 č.7.
[108] Jaroněk's personnel card. MZA-ZLÍN K.1023 č.14.
[109] Ibid.

modernity. In other words, the Bat'a way of being in the world was not supposed to change, rather, the world would change to it.

CONCLUSION

The radical implementation of American industrial management theories meshed over time with the local practice of deference, and, along with the influences of modernism, helped to shape the ideal Bat'a employee. This ideal, though, was constantly in the process of becoming, and as the context changed, so too did notions of the perfect worker. Furthermore, the often times highly subjective decrees from top bosses reveal the space between ideas and actions. In other words, though the company espoused a "scientific" or objective approach to appearance and behavior, in reality managers often acted on subjective feeling. While this is certainly not surprising, it does reveal the "shadows" that existed within top management. Thus, at the highest levels of the company, personality played a key role in what, how, why, and to whom control should be given. This subjectivity challenges assumptions that the Bat'a top management operated within a clearly defined, highly ordered set of rules with which to govern and illustrates the futility of conceptualizing Bat'a management as homogeneous. Chiefly, this chapter followed the Bat'a system over time in order to see the relationship between the ideal manager and employees in a modernizing, rationalizing system. As has been argued, the Bat'a managerial ideal underwent a significant shift with the transition of chief executives. In short, as the system expanded into all aspects of daily life, leaders work habits no longer justified their position, for they had to demonstrate the aesthetic characteristics of the new industrial man.

Chapter 3: "Enthusiastic Woman – Successful Man; Modest Woman-Lazy Man": Women in the Bat'a System [110]

Figure 2.1, seen below, comes across to today's viewer as a sarcastic take on the monotony of life in Bat'a's Zlín. The artist indeed presents the homes in the neighborhood as being exactly the same – so much so that even the numbers on the houses are identical. The children are faceless and play with the same toys. The mothers standing in front of their "Bat'a cottages" appear as uniform characters cut from one maternal mold. Even the plants conform to one standard. Yet, this illustration was not intended to poke fun at the gendered and standardized ideals of the company. Rather, it was meant to evoke what to the company was a triumphant achievement; the establishment of a middle class gender order in working class neighborhoods. For, to the company, women and children waiting in perfectly rationalized neighborhoods for their laboring husbands and fathers was a long-term goal that seemingly upheld order and harmony in an industrial society. Furthermore, all of the homes have electricity, as seen in the wires above them. This way of life, then, was not viewed as a conservative retreat to an era of strict gendered divisions in labor, but as a way forward. Based on the family values of Tomas Bat'a, which were a mixture of Midwestern family values, collectivism, and modernism, from 1923-1940 the company strove to rationalize gender relationships by making females into housewives and mothers. And they put considerable resources into doing so. The illustration was meant to capture the success of the project.

[110] Vilém Vesely, *600 Hesel Bat'a* (Tisk: Zlín) 1939.

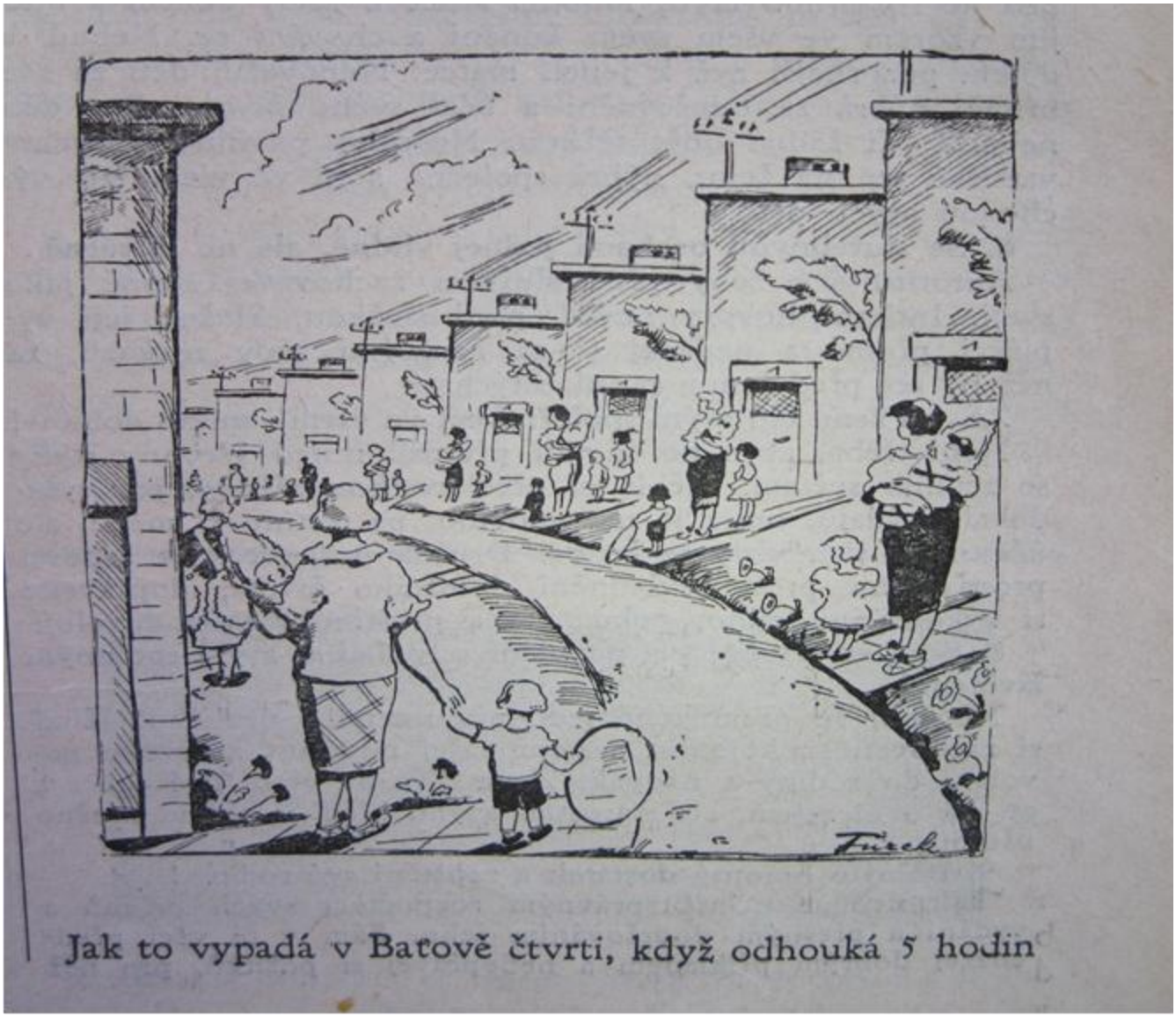

Fig. 2.1 “How the Bat'a neighborhoods look when the five o clock whistle blows.” Sděleni July 2, 1927.

However, such a standardized picture rarely captured the complex roles women ended up having in the kingdom of shoes. For, though routinely reminded in subtle and not so subtle ways that their place was at home taking care of children and as consumers in department stores, women simultaneously experienced new opportunities for work,

travel, and socialization as the company and town rapidly expanded. In addition, the company's two-fold desire to shape women into ideal citizen-mothers and avid consumers opened new educational possibilities for women while giving them a significant amount of power in their economic choices. What follows reveals this contradictory and complex relationship between females and the paternalistic company.

BATAWOMEN IN CONTEXT

In her study on gender and democracy in Czechoslovakia from 1918-1950, Melissa Feinberg finds a steady decline in the women's rights movement through the course of the interwar period. She sees the heady days of early democracy and their promise of full gender equality giving way to fears about the loss of traditional family units. For Feinberg, the Women's National Council, and indeed a democratic Czechoslovakia committed to individual rights, lost a struggle to overturn a patriarchal conventional mentality that placed men and women in a gendered hierarchy. When faced with the uncertainty of interwar Europe, she argues, Czechs turned away from full civil equality. Instead, a myriad of groups squashed efforts to enact reform in civil law and the government began placing limits on women's rights, such as the re-institution of the *celibát* laws for female civil servants.[111] All of this, argues Feinberg, underscored a general uneasiness with democracy- an uneasiness that eventually led to widespread acceptance of authoritarian government.[112]

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[111] The *celibát* laws dated to the 1867 Austrian constitution, and required that females in the civil service be abstinent and single. See Feinberg, Melissa. *Elusive Equality: Gender, Citizenship, and the Limits of Democracy in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1950*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006.
[112] Ibid.

Such a trend is barely evident in the Bat'a world. Unsurprisingly, in a patriarchal company town, gender equality and women's movements never had the chance to form independent, meaningful organizations even from the start of the First Republic. For the traditional gendered model of the family that most Czechs accepted was the foundation of the company's organization. The patriarch, Tomas, created a familial structure of management that had an interrelated group of men overseeing thousands of employees. Their wives stayed out of the factory but were visible in the community, participating in organizations such as the Red Cross and local relief efforts. This middle-class model was then applied, as will be seen, through the ranks of workers so that every woman who worked for Bat'a was in an unequal relationship with her male coworkers from the day she began her job. Female employees were seen as temporary workers, to be paid less while being guided into ideal modern women, which meant married women with children who stayed at home. Indeed, Bat'a maintained that women should quit the factory after a time to become wives and mothers. Then, she should aggressively push her man to rise in the company, mostly by becoming a ravenous consumer.[113] Her labor, particularly at home, was seen as drudgery by the Bat'a ideologues, who dreamed of a future free of housework for the wife, with machines, cleaning services, and food deliveries (all company run) taking care of everything. Thus, women were explicitly outside the world of work; outside of the narrative of labor. Their sexuality was seen as a threat to the

[113] Several recent studied have traced the rise of the idea of woman as consumer citizen elsewhere. Several excellent works are: De Grazia, Victoria, and Ellen Furlough. *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. Tiersten, Lisa. *Marianne in the Market: Envisioning Consumer Society in Fin-De-Siècle France*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. Carter, Erica. *How German Is She?: Postwar West German Reconstruction and the Consuming Woman*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.

rational order of the garden city and their voices were marginalized from the beginning. Without them, Bat'a developed a patriarchal business structure with little to no interference from women's groups; a structure that would look very similar to the traditional ideals of the authoritarian Second Republic of Czechoslovakia. Zlín throughout the Bat'a era, therefore, was much closer to where Czechoslovak society as a whole would end up in 1938; a sanctioned system of inequality.

And yet this hardened patriarchy was paired with the destabilizing forces of industrialization and rationalization. For, while ostensibly under the supervision of their "father", Tomas and later Jan, thousands of women who migrated to Zlín did not fit within the narrow ideal of company executives. Excited and often unsure about their new way of life, the women who flocked to work in the Bat'a factories were a diverse group of young villagers from all over the Republic, but especially Moravia. Their daily rhythms shifted dramatically as they went from the farm to the factory; their lives sped up and their choices expanded. And they did not always share Bat'a's morality. They drank and smoked, slept around, abandoned worksites, and would sometimes join up with clandestine radicals. Nor did they always share in the company's conception of their mission in society. A few even made their way into managerial positions, some became sportswomen, and others worked their entire lives in the factories. And while there is little evidence to suggest a change in the gendered ideals of company executives, the process of becoming modern led to significant changes for women. In fact, there was a considerable shift in the interwar period in the ways in which women could act; from conservative mothers and wives to athletes, drivers, consumers, and world travelers. This

change over time dovetailed with the rapid expansion of the company beginning in the early 1930s, when the workforce soared to over 40,000. But the radical changes in the day to day lives of women that the modern company town offered often subverted traditional gender roles, which unsettled executives. And, as women's opportunities expanded, the company aggressively pushed through a series of policies and practices that assured women would not take what was seen as men's work.

Thus one sees in the interwar era both considerable changes in what women, especially young women, were encouraged to try, as well as the expansion of a paternal structure that severely limited women's opportunities for professional advancement. The company routinely let women go when married or pregnant, closely watched their sex lives, and kept up a steady stream of rhetoric about their place in society, which was as caretakers to children and husbands, and consumers of the latest fashions. However, women should also know how to drive, have an interest in literature, speak another language, and exercise outdoors. All of these requirements, no matter how far from reality, meant that the life of a Bat'awoman was significantly different from her mother's and grandmother's, though it would be hard to argue that it was any more empowered. Women, who made up slightly over one third of the workforce from 1926 onward, were almost nonexistent in the managerial ranks and in city government.[114] And yet, they were a constant focus for Bat'a, for they were the primary customers (the company produced

[114] While complete statistics for all managers in the Bat'a era have yet to be compiled, several snapshots of management in the period reveal a profoundly male organization. All of the general directors were men throughout the period as well as the vast majority of department managers: There were 3 female directors out of 120 in 1937. See Osobni Odděleni MZA-ZLIN K 0. In 1938 out of 198 city government positions 13 of them went to women. See, Protokol městká řada 1938 Statní okresní archiv Zlín, Archiv města Zlína (Hereafter SOKA-AMZ) K. 71 č. 153

many more women's shoes than men's)[115]; they were the supposed driving force behind male ambition. They were the reason why men presumably worked.

Being a man in the company meant being competitive. It meant outperforming coworkers while serving others. Above all, the masculine ethos centered on working hard and "getting ahead." "Life is a Battle" one of the Bat'a creeds, reflected this ideal. Much like the Stakhanovite movement in the Soviet Union, men were celebrated for industrial stamina.[116] In fact, from 1925 onward, the company had them compete in a variety of contests; from athletic events to rubber boot production. But it was the Bat'a system itself that institutionalized competition at work. As explained in chapter one, the system pitted each department against the others. Therefore, all of the individual units were in a constant struggle to outproduce, outsell, and show up their counterparts. Thus, one of the main threats to the Batamen was laziness. And the source of laziness, to paraphrase from Tomáš, could be found at home. "Enthusiastic Woman – Successful Man; Modest Woman- Lazy Man."[117] Men's home life, and their choice of a partner, became of interest to the company.

Bat'a, like other high modernist projects, recast gender relations by asking questions about the ways in which women and men were expected to act, how they acted, and what sex meant in a utopian company town. I argue that while the company consistently upheld a traditional gendered hierarchy at home and at work, the

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[115] In 1938, for their world collection, the company had 350 types of shoes for women, 96 for men, and 128 for children. Světová kolekce 1938, Prodejní odděleni MZA-ZLIN K.1573 Č. 289.
[116] Siegelbaum, Lewis H. *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
[117] Veselý, Vilém. *600 hesel*. Ve Zlíně: Univerzita Tomáše Bati, Fakulta managementu a ekonomiky, 2007.

opportunities of a new industrial town filled with young, single, people undermined Bat'a morality. Repression, in its usual forms of censorship, denial, and prohibition, formed the backbone of Bat'a's sexual discourse, but underneath this discursive layer of do nots, a world of sexual possibility opened up.[118] The company's production of the knowledge of how genders were to act and its extensive forms of power created a rigidly paternal structure, but it was a structure that was routinely subverted.

Curiously, historians have yet to hold the Bat'a system up to a sustained gender analysis. As mentioned in the introduction, this is partially due to the emphasis on architecture in the historiography as well as the largely hagiographic view popular history has built up towards Bat'a in the last two decades, neither of which is overly concerned with locating women in the Bat'a era. Of the few works which delve into the Bat'a phenomenon with intellectual rigor, none has made gender a useful category of analysis.[119]

Perhaps this void in the historiography should not be that surprising given the overall approach to the modern company town, which has been to focus on the largely male workforces' interactions with management.[120] Yet historians have produced

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[118] My understanding of sexual repression is heavily indebted to Michel Foucault, particularly his work *The History of Sexuality*. New York: Random House, 1978.

[119] The two substantial histories of Bat'a, Ondřej Ševeček's *Zrození Baťovy průmyslové metropole*, and Bojumil Lehar's *Dějiny Baťova Koncernu 1894-1945* (Praha: Státní nakladatelství politické literatury 1960), do not look at the gender policies of the company, and have little room for women's stories in general. Ševeček, though, does do an excellent job in outlining what type of people lived where, and how young, single factory workers in large dormitories made up the bulk of the Bat'a workforce. In addition, Stanislav Holubec' article, "Silní milují život utopie, ideologiea a biopolitka Baťovského Zlína", on the intellectual history of Bat'a offers little insight into the Bat'a discourse on gender.

[120] Gerald Zahavi's otherwise excellent work on the Endicott Johnson Company does not use gender as a category of analysis, neither does Stephen Meyer's work on the Ford. G. Zahavi. *Workers, Managers, and Welfare Capitalism: The Shoeworkers and Tanners of Endicott Johnson, 1890-1950*. Urbana: University of

excellent work in the last decade or so dealing with gender relations in modern company towns. Stephen Kotkin's study of Magnitogorsk has uncovered the compromises authorities made with the situation on the ground, such as letting families eat privately together, and encouraging nuclear families in general, and with Soviet family policy .[121] Likewise, Laura Putnam's work on the United Fruit Company in Costa Rica goes into the multifaceted roles women had in Limon, the UFC's preeminent company town. She finds that though the UFC made much in the western press about its "civilizing mission" in Central America, the company actually had little interest in enforcing morals upon its workforce. Prostitution, therefore, was rampant. Putnam's work uncovers women's stories to illustrate the diversity of life in a company town, and to show how women and men constructed a culture outside of the reach of the company.[122]

Unlike in Limon, Zlín's authorities showed considerable interest in enforcing their morals upon the workforce. They went to great lengths trying to eliminate sexually transmitted diseases, and took allegations of immorality seriously. Of course their efforts did not stop promiscuity, but people's lives were distinctly marked by the gendered order of the company. For while Bat'a's media network was not representative of the diversity of opinions and desires of its workforce, its discourse influenced the ways in which women and men thought about their roles in society. Still, as this chapter reveals, these roles were destabilized by industrialization, and the Bat'a Company struggled to find a

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Illinois Press, 1988. S. Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908-1921*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981.

[121] Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization*. Berkeley: U. of California, 1995.

[122] Laura Putnam, *The Company They Kept: Migrants and the Politics of Gender in Caribbean Costa Rica, 1870-1960*. Chappel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

synthesis between its slogans and the changes brought about by Bat'a produced modernity.

SEX IN THE BAT'A ERA

While the Social Democrats and Communists controlled the Zlín city government from 1918-1923, gender equality was not high on their lists of concerns, as the area was overwhelmingly rural, Catholic, and poor. Many women continued to wear the head scarf, a sign of Catholic piety throughout rural Moravia. Morality and decency laws from the Habsburg era, which gave authorities the right to banish ne'er do wells without local residence, such as prostitutes and drunks, were not significantly altered. Nor does it seem were most citizens' ideas about gender roles, as the city's business and political life remained dominated by men. Still, liquor licensing was fairly loose in this period and the leftist city government did little to police the sexual conduct of its citizens.[123]

This laissez-faire attitude would change quickly upon the election of the Batamen in 1923. For while the Bat'a era's morality and decency laws maintained a striking consistency with the Habsburg and early Republic legal code, the enforcement of such laws changed markedly. The Batamen strove to police the sexual conduct of Zlínians and were willing to use city police to do so. Over time this moral policing of perceived sexual transgressions turned from a community affair to one handled by experts, who would inspect suspects in private. However, as the population increased, and thousands of

[123] The clearest evidence of the city government's lack of interest in moral policing can be found in the Minutes from the City Council, 1922-23, SOKA-ZLÍN K.65 Č.1.

young people flocked to the city, so too did the frequency of "immoral" sexual behavior. The Bat'a era, then, became both a period of repression and sexual possibility.

In his autobiography, Thomas J. Bat'a recalls a story about his dad becoming "incensed" at a young employee who traveled to Prague one evening to see Josephine Baker. "Spending time and money in pursuit of such entertainment seemed to him unconscionable."[124] For, though Bat'a constantly looked to new technologies to improve his factories' production, he abhorred modern, cosmopolitan attitudes about sex. Baker's scandalous revue, then, and sensuality in general, was a waste of time, as it drained workers of energy needed elsewhere. Much like other contemporaries in positions of authority, Bat'a saw sex as functional, and sexuality as a dangerous. His moral conservatism found its way into a wide array of Bat'a practices, from firing married women so that they would stay at home to vigilantly policing perceived sexual transgressions of both employees and Zlín residents.

The first record we have of the enforcement of Bat'a morality concerns a young woman who was accused by the city council of being indiscriminate in her sex life. Seventeen-year-old Ludmila Fornoušková moved away from her parents in Uherský Brod to live with her grandmother in Zlín in 1925. There, her aunt found out about her rendezvous with an accountant for the Baťa Company who was ten years her senior, "she stayed out almost every night until 10 in the evening!"[125] It seems that from this information the police then brought Fornoušková into the station to interview her about

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[124] Thomas J. Bata with Sonja Sinclar, *Bata- Shoemaker to the World* (Stoddard Pub.: Toronto) 1990, pg 25.

[125] L. Fornoušková. Trestní spisy. AMZ K581 č.1118.

her sex life. From this interview they discovered that she had been having sex with other men as well, and that she "did not even remember their names." The health inspector, Rudolf Gerbec, who had been appointed in 1924, was then called in to give her an exam. He thought her a "potential carrier of a sexual disease" and had her sent off to the regional hospital at Olomouc. In the meantime, the city council, under the personal guidance of Tomáš Bat'a, decided that she would be banished from the city for ten years for "leading an offensive moral life."[126] She spent three weeks in the hospital, even though she was declared to be healthy.[127] Within four years, she would be back in Zlín, where she was found working as an assistant at a small retail store in 1930 by a police officer. The council reviewed her case again, and finding that she was not old enough to have been tried as an adult in 1925, overturned their ruling, writing in the decision that, after all, she "now behaves properly."[128].

Fornoušková's case was enough of an exception that it became a city council matter, eliciting several letters from different council members, as well as from Fornoušková, as to what the city should do. That Bat'a took a personal interest also reflects on the size of the city at the time, and the small number of cases concerning immorality. Furthermore, it offers a glimpse as to the space and flexibility in the sexual policing of Zlín, as Fornoušková slipped back into the city undetected for several years. That the conduct of one young woman provoked such an interest speaks volumes about the small-town community feel of Zlín in the mid-1920s.

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[126] Ibid.
[127] Why she stayed in the hospital so long is unknown, since she had no STD.
[128] Ibid.

By 1937, however, such sexual incidents had become commonplace even among factory employees who lived in the closely supervised dormitories. And outside of higher ranking employees, company/city managers had little time to deal with individual cases of sexual promiscuity. Instead, they tried to create a network of surveillance and policies of exclusion to combat what many feared were an epidemic of perceived sexual transgressions.

In this context, Jan issued a directive on "the social protection of women at our work." This document finely illustrates both the inability of the company to control employees' sex lives as well as its commitment to substantially increase its presence in the private lives of female workers. Therefore, it is worth quoting at length:

> Women in the factory are often alienated by their intimacy with men at work. Frequently, the establishing of familiarity, and we have had several cases, ends in results that have a decisive influence on the lives of all women.
>
> It is necessary to find out about these actions and attitudes, which have to be watched and brought to the attention of the personnel department, so that they can solve these certain cases.
>
> 1. Single women employed in our factory have to be enlightened as to what our way of life requires of them. It has to be made clear to them that we have an interest in (their private lives) so that we can help them solve every important problem in their lives, even the question of choosing the right life partner...

3. There has to also be created in the factory a department of wedding affairs, which will be responsible for looking after wedding issues of our co-workers.

4. To avoid unwanted numbers of single women, we have arranged the following: we will announce that we are letting go single pregnant women.

5. But this will happen only when the personnel department cannot find a normal, human way to solve to the problem. In the case where the future father is reluctant to fulfill his duties, we must use moral, psychological reasoning, or legal arguments, and then it will be possible to persuade the man into becoming a good husband.

It has to be known throughout the neighborhood, that in every case of an afflicted (postižené) girl, we will protect her with our considerable legal and material resources.

If we cannot solve the girl's problem in a simple human way, we will remove her from our partnership.

The philosophical reasons for this are that a woman has stopped being a desirable member of our work family if it is no longer possible for her to attain a life full of happiness and satisfaction.[129]

Thus Jan's justification for firing single pregnant woman was that they tempted other women into an unfulfilled life. The codification of this policy was a part of an overall increased presence in the daily lives of the workers, and its motivation had much to do

[129] "Sociální ochrana ženy v naší práce "MZA-ZLÍN Osobní odděleni. K 1020 č.49.

with a rapidly expanding workforce. For, though such statistics were not kept, it seems that the young Bat'a workforce frequently slipped away from the company's surveillance system to have sex in all kinds of places and with all kinds of people. And the ones who were caught or found out often had extensive records from the personnel officer who wrote up their transgressions. And as the company banned pre-marital sex in all of its housing, couples were forced to go to unlikely places. We therefore have hundreds if not thousands of reports of illicit affairs and sexual acts in parking lots, forests and parks, retail stores, hotels, etc.[130]

In addition to facing personal investigations from the city/company into their love lives, female workers' livelihoods had long been threatened by becoming pregnant. For the company never abandoned the policy set forth by Tomas, which at first was more of an understanding, that women left the factory if they became pregnant. In 1937, though, the company codified their policy, "single pregnant women we will fire."[131] This affected thousands of women's lives. In the last half of 1938 alone the company fired 191 women for pregnancy.[132] This was not forced maternity leave, though the company gave marriage and maternity gifts to loyal employees; it was a policy of forced expulsion from the factory to the home. In the case of unmarried pregnant workers, their release meant having to move away from Zlín altogether. As single women were overwhelmingly

[130] These records can be found in both individual employee personnel cards, which are not categorized, as well as in the minutes from the social and personnel inspectors. Each department has its own personnel inspection reports, though these too are not categorized in the company archive at MZA-ZLÍN.
[131] "Sociální ochrana ženy v naší práce" MZA-ZLÍN Osobní odděleni. K 1020 č.49
[132] This statistic should not be read as only 30 single, pregnant employees. In fact, assuming that every married woman was also pregnant, there would be 66 single pregnant women let go in this time frame. Of course, some of these women could have already been married and some of the married women were not pregnant. Statisticky úřad, propuštení zamestnanci. MZA-ZLÍN K 0 č. 11.

housed in the large dormitories, and these dormitories had strict moral codes of conduct, anyone let go from the factory would lose his/her bed. This insured that single pregnant women would not "pollute" the other young workers. And as abortion remained illegal in all of Czechoslovakia throughout the interwar period, unmarried women had few options but to have the child and leave the company town.[133]

Of course, abortion being illegal did not mean stop women from having them. It seems though, that if they had them with any frequency at all, they did so successfully outside of the authorities' watchful eye. Out of around 400 sexually related cases that went before the city courts from 1923-1940, for example, only one of them dealt with abortion. This was the case of a woman quite similar to Fornoušková, one Anna Tvarůžková, whose secret the authorities found out after launching an extensive investigation into her sexual past. Though it remains unclear as to exactly why the police took Tvarůžková into the station for questioning on January 16, 1930, it seems that someone in town had reported on her sexual promiscuity. Regardless of the reason, once there she revealed a detailed saga of her sexual encounters and the steps she took to getting an abortion. Her story began at a dance party in the Založna Hotel, where Tvarůžková met and left with a local businessman, Jan Svoboda one night in November, 1929. They had sex in the back of one of his friend's cars in a parking garage. From there she revealed a series of affairs, one in the coat room of the sports club S.K. Bat'a, another

[133] For more on abortion in Czechoslovakia see M. Feinberg, *Elusive Equality: Gender, Citizenship, and the Limits of Democracy in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1950* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press) 2006. It would be interesting to try to find cases of illegal abortion in Zlín through health records. Unfortunately, these documents were not in the company, city, or national archives. No mention of abortion was made in company or city records.

again after a night dancing in the Založna, and finally an affair with Karel Kalinovský an adulterer who left her pregnant. From there, she went to a doctor in Zlín, Hanna Gutmannová, who provided her with a recommendation to terminate the pregnancy due to medical issues, which was the only way for a woman to have a legal abortion at the time. With this recommendation, Tvarůžková traveled to Brno by train with another doctor, Jan Opletal, who took her to an unnamed specialist. After the operation, Tvarůžková went to her family home in Kroměřiž, where "she laid down for an entire four days." The operation apparantly cost 1,000 CK, which Tvarůžková had to borrow. After being somehow found out once she returned to Zlín, she was placed on trial for abortion. Her confession, though, proved to get her a lighter sentence; instead of prison she was banished from the town for life. The authorities then tried to discover the doctor who performed the abortion, who was eventually discovered as one Dr. Boček. He was tried in Brno, but his fate remains unknown.[134]

One can only surmise that there were many other Tvarůžkovás. Especially given the numbers of unmarried pregnant women working in the Bat'a Company. And while their stories will probably never be fully told, we can assume that abortion was a part of their lives, a choice that everyone who feared losing their job and being removed from the garden city had to wrestle. Furthermore, that a network of doctors existed to safely perform the operation suggests that it was not an isolated event. This network shows how people negotiated and subverted Bat'a's control over women's bodies even within the

[134]Anna Tvarůžková, Trestni Spisy SOKA-AMZ, č. 1118.

scientific establishment. At the least, these doctors rejected the notion that healthcare was subject to the company's and state's morality.

The way the authorities handled the case reflects the institutionalization of a sexually repressed mentality, but it also reveals a prurient interest on the part of the authorities to discover every detail of Tvarůžková's sex life. In the margins of her confession, for example, someone with excellent handwriting, more than likely Mayor D. Čipera, wrote out the names of all of her partners and underlined them, as if needing to fixate on who she slept with. The police report gives an address for everyone she mentions in her account, something that seems to have become standard practice by 1928. That there are no records of such incidents before 1925 suggests that, as Foucault has proposed, with modernization sex becomes much more talked about within the discourse of scientific reason even as it becomes discursively repressed.[135]

Sexual education, after all, was not taught in Zlín until after World War II, and as the authorities vigilantly tried to eradicate sex outside of marriage, a general silence is noticeable throughout the era on the topic. Still, unlike in Limon, Costa Rica, or Magnitogorsk, but similar to Highland Park, Michigan, the authorities took a rather extreme interest in uncovering the sex lives of their people. And their techniques grew ever more "scientific" as the interwar period went on.

Indeed, by 1937 one could not find the city council banishing young women based on their allegedly loose morals, but instead sending a team of inspectors under the direction of the city doctor, Jan Gerbec, to look into the private lives of workers and

[135] Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

ordinary citizens.[136] Gerbec had full authority to take in whomever he so chose to test for sexually transmitted diseases, and suspects were carefully tracked. These persons were overwhelmingly female. From 1931 to 1934, for example, females made up 91 percent of all the reported cases of STDs in Zlín.[137] And only a few of these women were professionals, some twelve percent. The rest were mostly young factory workers from Moravia. The men were a mix between traveling businessmen and factory workers, whose average age was 22. In the rest of Czechoslovakia, the state did not enact any laws that granted authorities the power to inspect suspected "loose women" and prostitutes. It was not until 1943, during the years of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia that the Ministry of the Interior established a law mandating suspected prostitutes be inspected for STDs. Zlín, then, was decidedly ahead of the curve.[138]

Here, as elsewhere, the paternal company town was very interested in regulating female sexuality.[139] However, Bat'a's utopian town is unique in the level of interest the company showed in its sexual policing. Its traditional conservatism mixed with an insistence on the "science" of sexual relations. This mentality led to an increasingly sophisticated surveillance of women, who were seen as in need of protection, yet also as a threat capable of upsetting the entire gendered order.

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[136] See : Zdravotní policie, SOKA-AMZ č. 1123.
[137] Ibid., 1931-1934
[138] Macek, Pavel, and Lubomír Uhlíř. *Dějiny policie a četnictva protektorát Čechy a Morava a Slovenský stát (1939-1945)*.Praha: Police history, 2001. Pg. 65-68.
[139] See Joy Parr's, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men and Change in Two Industrial Towns 1880-1950.* Toronto, 1990; Thomas Klubock's *Contested Communities: Class, Gender, and Politics in Chile's El Teniente Copper Mine, 1904-1951*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998; and the aforementioned Laura Putnam, *The Company They Kept.*

THE DEPARTMENT STORE

The department store offered one of the more serious threats to the Bat'a gender order. Here, young women worked under the supervision of male managers often far from home. They typically lived in apartments with other saleswomen.[140] Unlike in the company towns, where workers' lives could be closely monitored, sales personnel had the most freedom of action of all Bat'a employees. Unsurprisingly, they also had a long record of allegedly scandalous behavior. Numerous reports exist of women in sales becoming intimately involved with their co-workers.[141] Karel Huták, the chief social officer for sales, oversaw dozens of such cases every year. His collection of reports details the life dramas of salespeople across Czechoslovakia, from suicides to childbirth. Yet his reports, especially when compared with those of other social inspectors, stand out for the volume of incidents of a sexual nature.

Stories such as Emilie Cisařová and Miroslav Zajíc, whose affair and the company's response, were typical. Císařová and Zajíc worked at the Bat'a House of Service in Prague, the company's flagship department store. There, Císařová worked as a cashier and Zajíc as a shoe repairman. Their affair lasted a year before the social inspector heard of it from another saleswoman in Pardubice, who added that Zajíc was married with children. An investigation was launched. Zajíc's wife had found out about the affair it seems before the company, and the two reconciled before the investigation

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[140] J. Bat'a "Žena obchodvedoucího- matkou našich prodavaček." *Zpravodaj*, *Zlín* September 21, 1937.
[141] Sociálni služba-prodejní odděleni, MZA-ZLÍN K. 0 č. 37. In fact, the personnel inspector found twenty-one cases from 1936-1938 of improper relationships between managers and employees, which resulted in twelve managers being fired immediately for their actions. The others were either demoted and their partners transferred or let go. In each case a male manager had become involved with a female employee. See hapter one for more detail on the increase of cases between male management and female employees.

began. Still, after an examination that even uncovered the name of the hotel they frequented, both employees were fired. “Seeing that in similar cases we typically either transfer or fire the employees...we decided to fire them both and write it down on their personnel cards.”[142]

The company's solution to the perceived problem of the “free” women of the department store was to have the wives of managers take on a maternal role.[143] They were to take in their husband's saleswomen and teach them how to be “ladies”. While I have been unable to uncover first person accounts of how women in sales felt about their new “mothers”, it is clear from personal inspectors that such relationships often created a sense of family among young saleswomen and the manager’s wife.[144] In some instances, the wife of a manager would be one of the first people spoken to about the behavior of the saleswomen.[145] Likewise, saleswomen were expected to live either together or close to each other to foster a sense of camaraderie. Though away from the surveillance network of the company town, the sales team could still be able to monitor each other. In the cases that this strategy did not work, the manager would often be removed and sent to a smaller store and demoted, or the offending saleswoman would be let go.

The company's anxieties about the new saleswoman were certainly nothing new. In fact, the emergence of the saleswoman throughout the West elicited similar fears. And while these fears came to be largely replaced by ideas that women in retail were symbols

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[142] Sociální služba-proddějní odděleni. MZA-ZLÍN K. 0 č.37
[143] J. Bat'a “Žena obchodvedoucího- matkou našich prodavaček.” *Zpravodaj*, *Zlín* September 21, 1937.
[144] Prodejní odděleni, socialní služba. MZA-ZLIN K. 0 č. 37
[145] Ibid.

of modernity whose maternal instincts made them better with customers, there remained a significant undercurrent of anxiety as to the goings-on of saleswomen.[146] For while companies on both sides of the Atlantic established the practice of women in sales, saleswomen walked a fine line between an object of desire and chaste images of the uprightness of their company.

HOMOSEXUALITY

Through thousands of city police, court, and medical records, along with hundreds of personnel inspectors' reports on the intimate lives of employees, there was not a single mention of homosexuality. Given authorities' attention to small details, particularly of a sexual nature, this was surprising. How could there be records of employees' choices of home furnishings, detailed accounts of scandalous sexual activity, and yet not a single mention of homosexuality? Did Zlín somehow miss the invention of the homosexual, which according to Foucault and other historians came about only in the last decades of the 19th Century?[147] Surely not. After all, the Habsburg world, and in particular Vienna, had decades of gay culture on display, from coffeehouses catering to gay clientele to psychoanalysts' publications on the nature of homosexuality. Sodomy had been a crime

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[146] For female salesclerks see Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois) 1986; Theresa Mcbride, "A Woman's World: Department Stores and the Evolution of Women's Employment, 1870-1920," *French Historical Studies 10* (Fall) 1978, 664-83; Carole Elizabeth Adams, *Women Clerks in Wilhelmine Germany: Issues of Class and Gender* (Ithaca: Cornell Press) 1998; Amy E. Randall, "Legitimizing Soviet Trade: Gender and the Feminization of the Retail Workforce in the Soviet 1930s," *Journal of Social History* vol. 37 no. 4 (2004) 965-990.

[147] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books) 1976.

since 1768 and remained one throughout the interwar years.[148] Homosexuality should have then been even more dangerous than getting involved with a coworker or having an affair. The company surely would have had some polemic either publicly or privately, against it. And yet not a single case of homosexuality went before the city courts from 1923-1939 and not a single personnel inspector reported on a supposed homosexual relationship. What can explain this void in the historical record?

When looking at the culture of Zlín and Bat'a, however, one understands that certain topics were simply not brought into the public discourse. After all, Moravia was traditionally a Catholic, conservative place, and a world apart from cosmopolitan Vienna. And while the idea of the homosexual was certainly available to the Batamen, their ability to identify their own as such was significantly limited by their ideas about what a male was and what he did. Indeed, the general discomfort with eroticism, which other high modernist projects shared, helps explain why uncovering homosexuality was not a priority. In fact, heterosexual sex was seen to be a much more dangerous act toward the public body, as it was illicit coupling between a man and a woman that brought in disease. It was not so much the sex as it was the consequences of the sex that posed a threat. Still, that homosexual activity remained off of the radar of the authorities throughout the interwar period suggests yet another space that the company did not penetrate.

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[148] Robert Beachy, "The German Invention of Homosexuality", *The Journal of Modern History* Vol. 82, No. 4, Science and the Making of Modern Culture (December 2010), pp. 801-838.

THE NEW WOMAN

Without a doubt, the industrialization of the Dřevnice Valley radically changed women's lives, giving them the opportunity to be wage earners away from their villages, introducing them to western fashions, and at times giving them the chance to go abroad. For many, the transition into the Bat'a world meant new clothes, ballroom dances, and the opportunity to meet a variety of people of the opposite sex. In addition, Bat'a-ism called for women to go to school, learn languages, learn how to drive a car, and play sports. For the desire to control woman's bodies, to make them "modern," also meant distancing them from the Moravian past; a past that at least to the Batovci was marked by rural poverty, ignorance alcoholism, and a backwards approach to work. For while women were to be housewives, they were to be modern housewives, bringing their children up according to the "bustle and haste" of an industrial society. To this end the company created several educational outlets for young women, all with the intent to wean them off of their mothers' and grandmothers' influence.

One of the first such initiatives was a "Women's Section" in the company newspaper. Begun in 1925, the section ran throughout the rest of the interwar period. Here, reporters addressed issues such as "How to Dress at Work," "What type of Man Should you Marry," and "Grandmothers are Bad Governesses."[149] Through such articles the company encouraged young women to separate themselves from the past and to see themselves as the vanguard of modernity. This distancing the "new woman" from the "grandmothers," constituted a central part of the Bat'a discourse:

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[149] "Jak se oblékáme do práce? September 18, 1926. „Važná Debata," January 21, 1928. "Babičky jsou špatnými vychovatelkami," April 20, 1936 Zlín.

From your grandmothers you heard how young women used to work with feathers. At that time they would gather together with their neighbors and while working create fairy tales. These tales had to be filled with horrible scares, filled with ghosts, the undead, graveyards, monsters, and the full moon. Happy tales could not be told because laughter would blow away the feathers.

That's how it used to be...

Look at the young girls of our era.

They have an entirely different function (poslání). When they sit in the halls with their sewing machines...there you have an example that a new generation is growing. While their mothers go stitch by stitch to embroider something on a personal handkerchief, these girls will have done a thousand stitches, which they are not making for the success of one, but for thousands.

And these girls pass their own romantic youths, but in an entirely different form. Their mind and heart is created entirely differently than that of their grandmothers or mothers. They see into the factories, they are participants in a new life, responsibility is placed on them, but they also feel free and independent. Work is certainly intruding into personal hobbies. But every spin of the wheel fills the envelope from payroll and with it the feeling of freedom.

> It is clear that this generation of women will look at the whole world with different eyes than the generation before them, because they know not only responsibility but even the good side of work which they are performing. It is easy to assume that these girls will make better housewives because they will be able to understand what it means for a man to go to work and live there with the bustle and haste.
>
> The modern working girl does not sew handkerchiefs, but when she sits down to the day's work, and easily dreams about the future alongside her chosen one, such a girl has set the proper foundations for her relationship to a working man.
>
> Nowhere is it written that in life young girls must remain and will remain in the workshops for many years. They sooner or later will leave, when it is their time, in order to begin a common household and then they will surely say, how good it was that they experienced what it means to earn a living with their own industry and labor. [150]

The excerpt above is clear evidence of the Bat'a feminine ideal. A woman was to go to high school, work for a bit in the factories (so that she could relate to her husband), get married and leave to become a housewife in one of the semi-detached company houses on a leafy street. There she would raise children according to the latest trends in pediatrics and make sure that when her husband came home he would have a restful, clean space. Her family would look good when they left the house, as she kept up with

[150] Berta Ženaty, „Dívky nově doby“ Zlín September 15, 1928.

the latest style.[151] Their clothes were to be clean; their make-up restrained; their stockings in perfect order. They were not to wear complicated clothing or ostentatious jewelry. Their men should be ambitious, sober, and sportsmen. And their examples of childcare and home economics needed to move from the past to a rationalized future. The new woman, therefore, was encouraged to turn away from her grandmother and mother and look to scientific management, namely in the guise of the company, for guidance. It was a message that executives maintained throughout the era.[152]

Writing some ten years later, Jan put the differences between the past world of the grandmother and the present lives of Bat'a's young employees even more starkly. The past, according to Jan, had been filled with "rude, screeching, unkempt, terrible lifestyles, living day to day, without any faith in the future." When idealizing the young female employee, he saw that "here a girl is filled with enjoyment, young, healthy, and happy like only the young can be, but also responsible...She looks forward to the future."[153] And her future should hold, above all, matrimony.

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[151] For a concise account of the Bat'a feminine ideal see "Naše Žena" *Zlín*, February 19, 1928. pg. 7.
[152] Melissa Feinberg's work traced the science of home-making among conservative women in Czechoslovakia, which suggests a connection between the groups. Feinberg, Melissa. *Elusive Equality: Gender, Citizenship, and the Limits of Democracy in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1950*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006.
[153] "Naše mladé ženy" Zlín Jan. 4, 1937.

MARRIAGE

"I know of no more powerful influence on a man's will to work than that of the influence of his wife." Sometimes it is necessary to show this influence by sewing on buttons and cleaning coats. I do not think that these are small things." J.A. Bat'a [154]

Marriage policy was one of the company's foremost tools in upholding the gendered hierarchy. For men, upward mobility often depended on marriage. For example, the company's social workers, first organized under the Social Department in 1924, had to be married to be considered for the job.[155] These men were responsible for checking out workers' requests for assistance and inspecting their homes. Likewise, sales managers were expected to marry before taking over control of a store. Of course, all of the top management was also married. Eventually, these executives succeeded in creating a system where marriage was a fundamental step to higher wages for men, and one of the only ways a woman could escape the crowded dormitories in Zlín.

However, for women, this pro-marriage policy translated into the loss of their jobs. Like the pregnancy policy, the marriage policy was at first an unwritten understanding, and then sometime in the early 1930s/late 1920s the policy came to be codified; managers had to let go women who married.[156] This policy, much like the pregnancy policy, had a significant impact. In the last half of 1938, 161 women were let go from the factory for getting married.[157] What they received in return, assuming that they married a Bat'a employee, was a better house, a marriage gift, usually around

[154] Information book for the personnel inspector, Osobní odděleni, 1938. MZA ZLÍN K. 1506 č. 2
[155] Sociálni/osobni oddělení. MZA-ZLÍN K. 1 č. 1332.
[156] One of the first examples for women workers was Tomáš' sister Marie, who was a manager in the stitching department until she got married to Josef Hlavnička in 1923 and left the firm to become a housewife. Osobní kartotéky MZA-ZLÍN K. 1021 č. 13.
[157] Statisticky úřad, propuštění zaměstnanci. MZA-ZLÍN K 0 č. 11.

500CK, and often the opportunity to travel with their husbands abroad. And while these incentives may seem trivial in light of losing their professional careers, moving into a semi-detached house from an overcrowded women's dormitory, where hall monitors closely watched one's actions, must have had tremendous appeal.[158]

For alongside these domestic instructions, the Bat'a newspapers ran articles on topics such as "The Woman and the Airplane," "Why a Woman Loves America," and "Modern Young Women and Sport."[159] The company was determined to push women into a modern lifestyle, in its own Bat'a-wrapped package. Doing so required training women (as well as men) to become comfortable with air travel, automobiles, and the wave of new sports that had entered into the country such as handball, ice hockey, and basketball. These ways of acting modern were strongly endorsed by the company.

The intensity of Zlín's motorization and aviation programs was not only designed for men. As the company developed its own airplanes, pilot school, and airports, it sent thousands of managers abroad through the air (one of the first companies in the world to do so).[160] Of course, these were overwhelmingly men. Still, the company encouraged their wives to fly with them, even on short business trips.[161] Similarly, the modern woman according to Bat'a should know how to drive, and, as Zlín became the city with the highest percentage of automobiles in the country, it was common to see women

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[158] For a good description of the typical female dormitory, see Ondřej Ševeček, "Socio-spatial Aspects of Zlín's Urbanization", in *The Bata Phenomenon: Zlin Architecture 1910-1960* (Regional Gallery of Fine Arts: Zlin) 2009.

[159] "Moderní mladá žena a sport" Feb. 19, 1934. „Proč žena miluje Ameriku" March 9, 1936. „Žena a letadlo" October 5, 1936, *Zlín*.

[160] Endicott-Johnson did not routinely use air travel until after World War II and neither did the Ford Company. See...

[161] "Přiklad pro naše žen" March 21, 1938, Zlín, pg. 4.

behind the wheel.[162] Much like in the United States, women drivers in Zlín were proof of an emancipation of sorts.[163] It was emancipation from older styles and fears of machines, though, rather than from a political system. In addition to driving, play began to become a way in which a woman could prove her modernity.

From around the turn of the century most athletic events for women were non-competitive social exercises organized by political or nationalist groups. The Social Democrats organized Spartakiada exercises for men and women in Zlín as early as 1918. These relatively small affairs consisted of synchronized gymnastic routines in open fields.[164] Likewise, the Sokol, a national gymnastics organization founded in 1862 conducted such public exercises from as early as 1902. Women's involvement in the club was marked as well, and the Sokol club became a crucial site for women's equality.[165] Given this context, then, it is little surprise that Bat'a created its own mass exercise activities. The first of which took place in the factories, where, just like at Endicott Johnson and Ford, workers performed short, daily work-outs, usually next to their work posts. By 1934, executives began seeing sport as a necessary requirement, and all workers had to participate in group exercises.[166] These group exercises turned into mass sport activities that were similar to that of the Sokol's, and continued into World War

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[162] By 1932 Zlín had 1 car for every 44 citizens as compared to Prague which had 1 for every 62. By 1936 it was 1:29. Doprava Silniční, AMZ-ZLÍN K144 č. 144.

[163] For a good discussion of women and the automobile in American society see Virginia Scharff. *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.

[164] Různé slavnosti ve Zlíně, fotoarchiv MZA-ZLÍN k.6 č.197.

[165] Claire E. Nolte, "Every Czech a Sokol! : Feminism and Nationalism in the Czech Sokol Movement", in *Austrian History Yearbook*, (1993), 24: 79-100.

[166] The first mention of the exercises during work was on October, 8, 1921 in *Sdělení*.

Two. Meanwhile, within five years of the first factory sponsored group workout, the company had begun an entire regime of athletics, from boxing to race car driving (ice hockey would come in 1926), which shifted the focus from physical exercise to competition.[167] Women began playing these competitive sports and began forming company sponsored teams in handball, tennis, track, and even racecar driving. And, like the men, they had some outstanding successes, especially in handball where the Bat'a team won the Czechoslovak championships in 1927.

Still, the move into competitive, individual sports was never a stable one for women. In the midst of the increasing opportunities to compete, the company reminded them, "Records are not for women."[168] Women played to be fit. Men played to win. Of course this tension between championing individual accomplishment and playing sport for physical fitness is never that far away from any modern society, what is interesting here is the stark contrast between new opportunities and the company's discourse that strove to enforce a clear division of labor between the sexes.

WOMEN'S WORK

The Bat'a "scientific" mentality called for a division in labor between the sexes to a minute degree. When one looks at each department, for example, a clear picture emerges as to what types of jobs men and women could do. Men represented more than

[167] August 1, 1925, *Sdělení*.
[168] "Rekordy nejsou pro ženy" *Zlín*, February 21, 1935.

85% of all tanners, machine workers, advertising personnel, engineers, dyers, shoe repairmen, and managers. Women made up over 75% of all secretaries, stitchers, salesclerks, and pedicurists.[169] This stark division extended into the public schools, where all elementary teachers were women and all principles were male. This hyper-rationalized division of the sexes could even be seen in the hallways of the factories where "women's coats hung on the right; and men's on the left".[170]

Still, some women were able to cross the gender divide. Eliška Junková, for example, was one of the few women who moved into a position of authority within the company. Junková joined the Bat'a racing team in the 1920s as the one and only female driver. She went on to win an impressive victory in Sicily in 1928 before leaving racing after the death of her husband. She then joined the sales division for tires, where she was crucial in dissuading Tomas Bat'a from going into car production.[171] Likewise, young women in retail had opportunities outside of the Bat'a ideal housewife, particularly when the company began sending its female graduates of the Bat'a School of Work abroad in the late 1930s. One of the more interesting stories comes from Josefa "Pepča" Hanáková, who was sent with a group of outstanding graduates to the United States in 1939 at the age of 20 (see chapter 6, "Bat'a in the World of Tomorrow" for more on the movement of personnel into the United States in 1939). From Maryland, Hanáková was sent with a very small group, some four people, to Haiti, where she helped establish a small shoe factory in Port-au-Prince. There, she oversaw some 300 Haitians. The Protektorat press

[169] These numbers of course fluctuated over time; these numbers are taken from 1937.
[170] Letter to Jaroněk from J. Bat'a. February 20, 1934. MZA-ZLIN K. 1020 č. 49.
[171] Alois Samohýl, "Production of Tires and Automobiles at the Bata Company" in *The Bata Phenomenon: Zlin Architecture 1910-1960.* Regional Gallery of Fine Arts: Zlín, 2009.

picked up her story in 1941 and several newspapers ran it as a human interest story.[172] It's unclear what happened to the adventurous Hanáková after this, but her story suggests that by the Nazi occupation, the company had all but abandoned its rigid gender divisions, favoring instead to send the best and brightest abroad regardless of sex.

The few stories of women succeeding in the company, though, were significantly counterbalanced by a steady rhetoric of gender difference, and the aforementioned policies designed to keep women from advancement, as well as a typically modern way of looking at the female form: as object and as customer.[173] In other words, the gaze of the company was male. And as Bat'a sought to eliminate the flaneur through its functionalist architecture, it sought to replace him with the hardened gaze of a scientist, creating a network of surveillance which sought access to the most intimate of places, especially female spaces, so that it could both determine the best way of selling to them and the best way to control them.

One of the key foci of the Bat'a Company was in dictating appearance. While the Bat'a obsession with appearance extended to all levels of employees, and to the students of Bat'a's School of Work, the company was perhaps most interested in how women looked. With typical scientific language, women were told that "the ideal woman's body type is 168 cm and weight is 56 kg...If you don't have this height you can at least try to

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[172] "Slovácké děvče instruktoru na Haiti", *Telegraf*, Morávské Ostrava, April, 1, 1941. The story also ran in the *Večerník Národní Práce*, Praha and the *Severočeské vydaní*.

[173] Of course, there is a large body of literature on the male gaze and a modern way of looking. Luara Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975, 1992) coined the term male gaze, while Walter Benjamin, Michel Foucault, and others have been instrumental in developing theories about modern ways of seeing.

make yourself look taller by wearing clothes that present a mirage (namely, never where shoes without heals)."[174]

Even at the end of the "Bat'a era," when the company began sending the best and brightest young people abroad, and was desperately trying to remain in control of the factories, executives chastised young women for not looking pretty enough. In a speech to the Young Women on April 13, 1939 Jan Bat'a lambasted the girls' appearances. "I imagined that in Zlín we would have been an example. Truly after half an hour (of being in Zlín) I met with girls who just about shook me out of my cloak the way they looked in the stores. Scuffed shoes, worn-out heels, torn pockets...hair like a boy, torn stockings, smeared make-up...I don't like telling you this!" Jan went on to say in a rambling speech that the source of all dishevelment and personal uncleanliness is at home, which is the domain of the woman, of the mother, "because the mother is the one who raises you." "You might be wondering why we are sitting here and why I am telling you about this so seriously...But I will tell you that it can happen that when I see a girl going from the factory or to the factory in scuffed shoes, when I see a girl with torn stockings, a dirty coat, it reflects not only on your patrons, your caretakers, and even yourselves, but it introduces this into the factory. And I wish that such girls be brought to me, because as you know, I am your father, and I will not tolerate this type of slovenliness for a minute. I will call not only the girls, but their caretakers and overseers, and I will write on their

[174] "Svět Žen" *Zlín*, August, 10, 1938.

cards. Because we cannot tolerate such people...who are supposed to help others but cannot even help themselves."[175]

This obsession with appearance was often unrealistic given the kinds of work people were doing in the factories. For at the same talk, young women countered Jan's various complaints by bringing up their day-to-day lives. "How are we supposed to have clean, nice stockings when the machines in the factory constantly tear at them? How can we wear sweaters (in the factory) when it is so hot in there?"[176] The paternal expectations of the company, then, rarely met the reality of working in a giant shoe factory. Still, the pressure exerted on women was very real, and thousands of women dressed in nice attire, their hair done and makeup on, as they sweated out their shift in front of a sewing machine.

The most obvious objectification of women to a male scientific gaze occurred within the modelárna, or modeling department. As figure 2.2 illustrates, in the modeling department men in laboratory jackets and business suits carefully studied the feet and shoes of female models as they walked on elevated runways. The models would spend all day taking on and off various pairs of shoes for the designers who measured each new pair on a chart that assessed comfort, style, and walk-ability. While no account seems to exist about the total number of models, the numerous pictures of the department in action suggests that they were young, nice-looking, impeccably dressed women. The men were usually older in technical clothing, holding charts and measuring instruments. Tellingly,

[175] Conference at the Masarýk School, April 13,1939. MZA-ZLÍN K. 1223 č. 192.
[176] Ibid.

instead of male models, the company used its own modeling department technicians.[177] Thus, this obviously crucial part in the design phase of mass-producing shoes for a sophisticated market was entirely gendered.

Fig. 2.2. A typical inspection of a model's shoes.[178]

The focus on female customers meant far more shoes and shoe styles for a woman's feet.[179] In 1938, for example, the company had 350 different types of women's shoes as compared to 96 types of men's shoes. Advertisements were also twice as likely to feature

[177] Modelárna zkoušení, MZA-ZLÍN K.23 Č. 1006.
[178] Fotoarchiv, MZA-ZLÍN K.23 č.1006.
[179] MZA-ZLIN Světová kolekce, 1938. K.1573 č.289.

females as males, and commonly featured female customers being waited on. In one way, the entire company was working to please the women of Europe.

Yet the work of the women of Europe was supposed to become obsolete in the face of technological progress. Indeed, as seen in the numerous articles written by executives predicting the future, women's work at home was drudgery. And, according to the Batamen, machines would eliminate it. As Tomas said in a speech in 1927, "Our ambition is to release all our womanfolk from the last remnants of household drudgery and to help them to establish homes of which they may justly be proud".[180] Company leaders took up his vision. Dominik Čipera envisioned a future where "housewives of greater Zlin are not forced to do the heavy household work and can devote themselves fully to family life instead, to bringing up the next generation and to their husbands, to whom they provide support and advice."[181]

Likewise, the company's architect and urban planner Vladimir Karfik wrote the following in 1934 when asked to predict the future of 1974.

> What will the life of the future family that has paid for our services look like? The family of the teacher Klement, consisting of five members have a beautiful house surrounded by greenery at the Štákovy paseky location that was built by one of our department stores.
>
> Every morning, life in this residential area is symbolized by Bat'a helicopters which hover in the air and then descend to the flat roofs of the small villas,

[180] Anthony Cekota, *Zlin: The Place of Activity* (TISK: Prague) 1936. pg 15.
[181] Domink Čipera, "Jak vypadat Zlín v 40 let?" *Zlín*, 1934.

> delivering ready to eat English breakfasts to their occupants...the children leave for school and the parents for work. Mrs. Klement does not have to do any cooking or cleaning – or washing, for that matter, since breakfast was served by the department store on aesthetic and hygienic paper plates which are simply discarded after use; the same routine takes place at midday and in the evening. Keeping the houses tidy is taken care of by our employees who come every morning and in a few minutes clean the living space with the help of faultless machinery...[182]

This utopian vision of a future free of housework was not unusual in the interwar period, as any number of futuristic magazine articles can attest. Yet, in a society organized around the nobility of labor, Bat'a executives' visions of home were especially denigrating to women. For if their life goal was to become ambitious housewives, taking care of home and children, what were they to do when technology did all of the work?

CONCLUSION

The radical changes brought on by World War One along with the rationalization and mechanization of industry dramatically changed the opportunities and styles of women in Zlín. The Bat'a Company, though, presented women with a paradox. By presenting women's work as drudgery and men's work as honorable, Bat'a placed women outside of the fundamental unifying principle, the linchpin of the entire Bat'a

[182] V. Karlík, "Domy služeb v roce 1974" in *The Bata Phenomenon: Zlin Architecture 1910-1960.* Regional Gallery of Fine Arts: Zlín, 2009.

ideology, which was labor. Though women worked their entire productive lives with the company, they were always outside of the ideal Bat'a family, and they faced constant reminders of this in unequal pay, slow to nonexistent promotion, and a daily rhetoric that their place was not in the factory. However, the new way of living, which was supposedly bringing about cleaner, more rational relationships between the sexes, created a profoundly unstable situation for the bourgeiosie ideal: women equaled the number of men in the factory by 1937, and modernization brought in a host of scandalous opportunities. Opportunities the Batamen and women did not always resist. The inherent conflict between industrialization and traditional ideals of the family meant that Bat'a's discourse on gender was often far removed from people's experiences. And while creating significant methods to enforce middle class family values, such as the pregnancy and marriage policies, the company also provided thousands of women a way out of their villages and into a modern lifestyle where they could play, drive, and dress in ways their mothers simply could not.

And yet, certain women did experience the Bat'a ideal by taking care of husband and children at home in the garden districts of Zlín. Certainly, as Feinberg argues, this ideal family unit appealed to a majority of Czechoslovaks. Still, no matter how "traditional" the Bat'a gender order, being a woman in Zlín was a radical departure from the mostly rural, peasant backgrounds of the majority of the Bat'a workforce. This paradox could be found throughout the world at the time in other model company towns where women both entered the workforce in large numbers and entered into a paternal society that tried to make them into ideal modern housewives. Analyzing women's

experiences in Zlín, therefore, reflects a global phenomenon of social conservatism existing alongside new ways of acting female in high modernist, welfare capitalist projects.

Chapter 4: Youth and Education in Zlín, 1923-1941

Alexander Reinhartz arrived in Zlín on September 22, 1937, to begin his training in the Bat'a School of Work (BSP).[183] He was a fifteen-year-old from Mukachevo, in what was then Subcarpathian Ruthenia, the eastern most and least industrialized province of Czechoslovakia.[184] Born to the son of Jewish agricultural workers, Reinhartz's acceptance into the prestigious school promised an opportunity to become one of the company's elite Young Men, a group who could expect world travel, excellent salaries, and generous benefits - all unheard of for a poor peasant from the east.[185] It was with considerable disappointment, therefore, when Alexander's father Miksha found out that his son was not doing well in Zlín.

In November 1938, news reached Mukachevo of Alexander's trouble with school authorities. When Miksha heard that Alexander was on the verge of being kicked out of the school, he wrote a desperate plea to the company. Miksha himself had "no prospects", so Alexander "cannot find work here." His letter blamed the family's poverty on recent political changes, which took Mukachevo from Czechoslovak to Hungarian authority after the Vienna Award of 1938. "After this change I have been left with three sons who are all minors and cannot be employed. I have no way to make money anymore. Sending my son home would worsen this terrible situation...Please, if you send him away from

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[183] From here on Bat'a School of Work will be abbreviated by its Czech initials BSP (Baťová Škola Práce). The acronym is used by its alumni association and facilitates an easier cross-cultural understanding.

[184] The first Bat'a department store to open in the region was in Užhorod in 1929. When the company began operations they reported that "Rusyn footwear is the most primitive imaginable." Zlín. May 15, 1931, pg. 2. The clearest picture of economic differences between the different regions in Czechoslovakia can be found in the 1930 national census.

[185] Capitalization of Young Men and Women denotes the position of student in the Bat'a School of Work. Otherwise I simply mean adolescent.

this school it will destroy his young life...If you have to punish him please at least consider removing him to one of your sister factories in Hungary."[186]

Two weeks after Miksha's letter arrived at company headquarters, the *vychovatels* (who were something like instructors, life-coaches, and guardians to the Young Men) met and decided to fire Alexander and suspend him from the BSP on December 18, 1938. The reason, according to his vychovatel Jan Hoček, "I requested 300 crowns for him so that he could go home. He never went. The money he saved and lied that he sent 200 to his family. He does not have a receipt for this. This is a very bad boy, who on the whole doesn't care about being with us."[187] In a world where money management was seen as a window into character, every crown had to be accounted for and dishonest financial transactions were anathema. Alexander had little chance of remaining a Young Man if the accusations were true. He would have a final review in February before being removed from Zlín.

Ten days after the company's decision to suspend Alexander, he received a letter from his mother Rosalia, which contradicted Hoček's accusations. In it, Rosalia thanked Alexander for sending money home - exactly 200 Kč of it. While aware of some kind of trouble at Bat'a, Rosalia seemed to have no idea that her son was going to be kicked out over the money. "Please complete your studies and always remember that you are in a good position, you do not suffer from hunger and because of this you have to be completely satisfied." She adds, "father doesn't work at all and has no chance to do

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[186] Letter from Miksha Reinhartz to the Bat'a Company, December 4, 1939. Alexander Reinhartz. Osobní kartotéky, Morávský Zemský Archiv – prácovište Zlín (hereafter MZA-ZLIN) k1036 č.18.
[187] Personnel Card for Alexander Reinhartz. Osobní kartotéky, MZA-ZLIN k1036 č.18.

so."[188] The two letters paint a grim portrait of Jewish life in Mukachevo, where Jews were being increasingly marginalized. For his parents, staying in the BSP meant life or death for Alexander.

The vychovatels certainly read this letter, as they included it in his file, but it did not change their decision. Alexander's violation of the absolute transparency the company demanded of its students' affairs was unforgivable. The BSP guardians deemed Alexander unfit for continued employment and he had to leave Zlín. The final judgment came on February 21, 1939, just three weeks before the Nazis would invade the rump state of Czecho-Slovakia. He was, in the words of the vychovatel Hrušecký, "unreliable, unconscionable, and dishonest in his work reports. He was weak in his performance."[189]

Yet Alexander's "weakness" was not as well-defined as the company's final report made out. The young man aspired to become a retail manager, spoke five languages fluently, and later somehow survived World War Two; all three of which hint at ambition, intellect, and luck.[190] However, he was not an ideal Young Man, as his record was marked by mixed reviews from his superiors. He seemed to have done well as a rubber worker but struggled a year later when he was moved to the machine works division, where he was caught smoking, which nearly led to his termination. But he had

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[188] Letter from Rosalia Reinhartzová to Bat'a Company Alexander Reinhartz. Osobní kartotéky, MZA-ZLIN k1036 č.18.

[189] BSP Report Card on A.Reinhartz. Osobní kartotéky, MZA-ZLIN k1036 č.18.

[190] There is no company record of Alexander during the war, but assuming that he went home, his survival is remarkable. Though the Hungarian state reluctantly participated in the Holocaust, the Jewish population of the former Czechoslovak territory of Subcarpathian Ruthenia fell from 122,000 in 1939 to 15,000 by the end of the war. We have no record of his wartime activities, and the only evidence of his survival is his request to the company in 1945 for a statement of good conduct, which they quickly gave him.

ambition, as he dreamed of becoming a sales manager, and the company rated him as being "good" at his job.[191]

The story of Alexander Reinhartz illustrates the company's recruitment policies for young people, the ways in which its moral code was enforced on its students, and the unusual connection between factory and education in Zlín. Reinhartz, the son of Jewish peasants was accepted into the competitive program and given a chance for world travel partly because of his multilingualism and partly because of his poor, rural background. That he was removed for lying indicates the company's desire to engineer its youth into models of behavior. What mattered most was a person's attitude toward the company, rather than his intellectual ability. Alexander's story is also indicative of the mechanisms of control the company used on its students, as he was constantly under the surveillance of company men, who carefully tracked his spending and read his private letters. Alexander's story, then, highlights key aspects of education in Zlín.

Being young in the kingdom of shoes was markedly different from other parts of Czechoslovakia, where nationalists competed for children, discipline was uneven, and private trade schools were rare.[192] Indeed, the vast majority of Czechoslovak youth went to Czech, German, Slovak, or Hungarian speaking public schools, took classes based on official curricula, and had most after school activities offered to them by various nationalist associations. As has been well-documented elsewhere, youth were central to

[191] The company rated employees' overall performance on a five point scale, with "good" being a three.
[192] For an excellent account of the numbers and statistics of interwar Czechoslovakia's school system in English, see U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Education. Bulletin. No. 11, 1935.

nationalists who struggled to recruit them to their cause.[193] In Bat'a's Zlín, nationalism was muted by the desire to create a workforce capable of doing business around the world. Students needed to be world citizens, much like managers. This need led to an unusually international education, as standards called for tri-lingualism, international students were prevalent, and Young Men and Women were trained to go abroad. Of course, those students who were not among the elite BSP students had fewer global options but were nevertheless subject to a wide ranging experiment in education as the company took control of all public and private schools in the area. Students' souls were no less important to the Batamen than to nationalists. In the linear, future-oriented ideology of Bata-ism, youth were to move far beyond their parents as they harnessed technology, embraced a rational way of life, and put aside national difference to compete economically in the world. While other pedagogues in other parts of Czechoslovakia struggled to make children into nationalist cadres, Bataism strove to remake them into new industrial humans, whose rhythms would be synchronized with the fast pace of the factory and the movements of their fellow workers.

Also remarkable was the strict, but modern, discipline of the Zlín school system, a ground-breaking pedagogy, and opportunities for students to make money. Students in Bat'a's Zlín lived in one of the more advanced surveillance networks in Europe, which sought to regulate their bodies and habits. Getting caught smoking, for example, would usually get a student in trouble elsewhere, but in Zlín, it could get a student expelled from

[193] For the battle for children's national allegiance, see Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948*. (Ithaca: Cornell). 2008

the city. However, students were almost never subjected to the kinds of physical punishment that were common in schools across Czechoslovakia.[194] Modern education, as defined by Bat'a, also meant the end of the so-called "hanba" approach, where educators would berate students in front of the classroom for mistakes. Instead, education in Zlín championed individual experimentation, encouraging students to find solutions to problems by devising their own solutions, under the direction of relatively well-paid teachers. Student life could also be unusually lucrative, as students in the Bat'a schools began wage earning as early as 14, and most had 10,000 Kč in their mandatory savings accounts by the time they graduated.[195]

Yet the experience of growing up Bat'a was not unique to Zlín. Young people in the Bat'a world shared striking similarities with their counterparts in other areas of the world where a company ran the town. Education in Zlín, much like at Fordlandia, Magnitogorsk, and Johnson City, did not stop at the schools' doorways. For the city itself was a "school of civic education", where citizens learned from the style and substance of its buildings and streets and the company's messages bombarded the citizenry from speakers, posters, store fronts, and city hall.[196] In these high modernist company towns, executives shared the belief that education needed to be a 24/7 operation for all of the town's citizens, and that it needed to be dramatically re-fitted for a new, modern lifestyle. While these cities have had historians look into their educational system, though, Zlín's has gone unnoticed.

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[194] Odilka Kodedová. *Kapitoly z dějin českého učitelstva, 1890-1938* (Praha: SPN) 1972.
[195] At today's exchange rate, that would be $7700 after inflation.
[196] Greg Grandin. Fordlandia: *The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jingle City. New York: Metropolitan Books. 2009*. pg. 268

THE BAT'A SCHOOL OF WORK

Tomas Baťa and other top executives created the the Bat'a School of Work (BSP) in 1925. Designed to be a trade school for a new type of shoemaker, the BSP would grow into the largest private industrial school in Czechoslovakia, with over 5,000 students by 1938.[197] This remarkable growth accompanied the company's worldwide expansion, which required a large group of reliable managers to travel the world. Expansion also required a cadre of managers from the Bat'a satellite towns, many of which were located in rural settings where industrial schools were few and far between. These needs meant that the BSP would be a thoroughly international school, and education would be centered on the factory. The school came to symbolize the energetic heart of the Bat'a enterprise.

The context of the founding of the school reveals varied motivations. As Tomas had just returned from a lengthy visit to the United States, where he had visited both the Ford and Endicott-Johnson factories, he seems to have realized the comparatively poor training his new employees had for industrial work. Turnover was a constant problem, as workers came into the city only to leave a few months later when they either needed to help with the harvest or had tired of the monotony of industrial labor. In addition to his awareness of the lack of advanced industrial training in Zlín, Tomas grew increasingly interested in expanding into the developing world when he travelled to India in 1925,

[197] Svatopluk Jabůrek, "Vznik, smysl a úspěchy Baťovy školy práce." http://www.staryzlin.cz/batova-skola-prace.php

where he saw limitless possibility in the idea that, "half the world goes barefoot." The company began to expand after having weathered the difficult economy of post-WWI Europe. The newspaper in these years ran daily announcements for new positions to be filled. Bat'a needed more workers, more stable workers, and more skilled workers.

That summer, a polemical battle raged in the local press and at city hall as the Batamen challenged school officials over building standards, curriculum, and pedagogy.[198] The struggle over education accompanied long-running feuds with purveyors of alcohol and socialism. As mentioned in the chapter "Crime and Punishment in the Kingdom of Shoes," the chief threats to Bat'a's moral hegemony in Zlín came from communists and barkeepers, or so the Batamen thought. In 1925, they added the schoolmaster of Zlín, Jan Jaša, and the teacher's union to their list of undesirables. At a meeting at city hall on July 3, 1925, Tomas and Jaša clashed in public for the first time when Tomas announced his bold vision for reforming education. "The industry of our community requests new types of teaching practices in our entire region, so that our young people maintain links with all parts of the world, and so that they acquire the skills necessary for their new employment."[199] Jaša replied with clear frustration at the mayor's suggestions, "Work at a school is different from work at a factory."[200] The teachers' opposition initially blocked the company's plans for wide-ranging school reform. Though having won control over city government in 1923 with a large majority, Bat'a's attempt at educational reform proved more of a struggle. Education came to be seen as a contest,

198 Articles regarding the back and forth between the teachers and the company appear numerous times in the company newspaper, *Zlín*,1924-26.
199 Příloha „Sdělení" June 4, 1925.
200 Ibid.

and it was a contest that the Batamen felt they would only be able to win by going outside of the public school system. They wanted a loyal core of young employees, trained in the methods of industrial work and faithful to the moral code of the executives. Faced with the hostility of local teachers, the company founded a school of their own. By the end of 1925, the BSP had been born.

The charter statement made clear that the school would be highly selective. "We will take only the best boys and girls from peasant and craftsman families for our factories."[201] Tomas, like his hero Henry Ford, felt that the sons and daughters of the rural and industrial working classes would be the best candidates for life in the factories.[202] Thus, the first classes of Young Men were comprised of students from the surrounding Moravian countryside. This parochialism would not last long. By 1937, the BSP received approximately 10,000 applications from all over Europe for 1,500 openings.[203] The Great Depression, which left approximately one million people unemployed in Czechoslovakia, greatly increased interest in the BSP. Before the bottom fell out of the world economy, however, the BSP remained very much a local concern.

The BSP's first few years were rather modest compared to what would come later. The Young Men lived in various boarding houses throughout the city, and were largely responsible for finding their way to and from work and school, which were both held in one of the factory buildings. The first groups of adolescents responded to the promise of

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[201] Charter Statement for the Bat'ova Škola Práce. MZA-ZLÍN k. 1187 č.3.

[202] Henry Ford's ideas about where to look for the modern factory workforce can be found in his autobiography, *My Life and Work*, which was reprinted in the company newspaper in Zlín over the course of four years between 1924-1927.

[203] Školy – studíjní Ustav výchova prumyslového člověka. MZA-ZLIN k.1192 č. 39.

permanent factory work. In the words of a company pamphlet sent out to prospective young men, "we are looking for boys between the ages of 14-16 who have a love for work, an inclination for factory work, and want to specialize in this type of work. They want to put into this work not only their minds but also their hearts, and they will sign up for not only lifetime employment, but to gain an outstanding character."[204] In addition to their desire to find enthusiastic workers, executives also furthered their pedagogical goal to create workers capable of adapting and inventing in the midst of rapid advances in industrial technology.

The primary goal was to have young workers gain expertise in various aspects of shoe production by working in the factory and attending classes on the technical aspects of shoemaking. A Young Man's daily schedule from 1925-1930 consisted of two main parts: work and school. From 7-12 and from 3-5 P.M. the Young Men worked in various sections of the factory. Most would move to a new section each school year, though some would stay in one department their entire time. After 5, they would take evening classes in accounting, bookkeeping, machinery, electronics, shoe manufacturing and business, and a class in either German or English.[205] Company executives hoped that such a schedule would create a new type of worker - one who could stay apace with constantly changing technology. They also came to see the need for a new type of character for both men and women, which they believed could be created from a collective lifestyle and close supervision.

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[204] Information List about the Dormitory for Young Men (1929-30) MZA-ZLIN. K.1187 č. 2
[205] Information List about the Internat for Young Men (1929,30) MZA-ZLIN. K.1187 č. 2

In 1929, the BSP started its school for women. Similar principles applied to the Young Women, but, as has been detailed in the chapter "Women and Sex", women were continually viewed through a paternalistic lens that paid them less, kept them out of executive positions, and ultimately valued them as homemakers. Yet the company in 1929 employed over four thousand women, almost two thousand as sewing machine operators alone and increasingly looked to them to be the face of the sales departments.[206] The Young Women in the BSP, like their adult counterparts throughout the factories, were in a paradoxical situation.

The BSP for Young Women began four years after the founding of the school for men and had a different curriculum, and yet was subject to the same guiding principles that informed the young men's school. Chiefly, the school was designed to "instill in the female student a strong character from which she can make moral decisions independently that benefit the public and strengthen her family."[207] The emphasis on family and character led to a holistic teaching philosophy that demanded they be monitored at all times. "The method of training such young women involves carefully following their behavior in the dormitories as well as their wages. Elevating their moral qualities takes place at school, in the factory, and at the dormitories and it requires (us) to devote our full attention."[208] Like the Young Men, women were to be carefully watched to improve their moral character, but that character was not to be the same. Whereas the Young Men were constantly encouraged to compete with one another, Young Women

[206] Employment statistics, Personnel Department. 1932-1940. MZA-ZLÍN K. 121 č.121.
[207] Principles of Behaviour for the Young Women. School for Young Women Curriculum Rules and Behavior. MZA-ZLÍN K.1192 č.39.
[208] Ibid.

were put in classes such as "rhythmics" which was the practice of synchronized movement. Young Women had to take courses in sewing, family behavior, health, "home culture" (bytová kultura), and home economics.[209] There would also be significantly fewer spots for women in the BSP than for men: 1,318 Young Women as compared to 2500 Young Men in 1931.[210]

The school was a success, mostly because it offered young, poor, and rural teenagers gainful employment. By 1931 there were 2500 Young Men and a massive expansion of living quarters was underway. As Bat'a grew, the Young Men became subject to a much more organized experiment in social engineering when, in 1929, the company built blocks of dormitories and created the vychovatel system. The living quarters by 1936 became a city within a city, housing 6,000 students. The dormitories were to be the cradle of the new industrial man, and, to the Batamen at least, were the key to future prosperity.

LIFE IN THE INTERNÁT

In the preeminent high modernist city of Zlín, everyone was suspect to the company's gaze. Yet the young adults at the dormitories experienced a level of control far more intensive than the rest of the populace. From mandatory radio hours to the company's tight control of their personal finances, it is difficult to find any moments of individual freedom in the life of the Young Men and Women. This level of control,

[209] Curriculum for the Young Women. MZA-ZLÍN K.1192 č.39.
[210] Školy – studíjní Ustav výchova prumyslového člověka. MZA-ZLIN k.1192 č. 39.

however, did not translate to widespread unhappiness and revolt. In fact, the young people in the dormitories were often energetic partners in Bat'a's educational project. They volunteered for tasks, kept watch on potential troublemakers, and many would later join the alumni club for the BSP, the Klub absolventů Baťovy Školy Práce (ABS), carefully cultivating the Bat'a myth.

The company built the dormitories between 1929-1937. The construction accompanied a common pattern: local resistance, Bat'a persistance and eventual company success. In 1929, the local aristocratic family, the Haupts, refused to allow the company to build the dormitories on their large estate. The struggle between aristocracy and industry in Zlín ended in a total Bat'a victory when the company, through the auspices of the city, bought all of the land as well as the noble estate house in 1929.[211] Having gained ownership of the land, Bat'a began building the campus for its new workers. The eight dormitories exemplified the Bat'a architectural style: large rectangular structures made of iron, brick, and glass whose proportions were all based around the Bat'a standard size of 6.15 by 6.15 metres, "a uniform measurement which literally served as a standardization of work and life."[212]

The interiors of these standardized buildings housed between 250-300 young people on each floor. The floors consisted of twenty two bedrooms, two of which were for the vychovatels, two bathrooms, and one long hallway. The rooms typically had ten

[211] Eduard Staša, Zlínský prospekt internátů, *Naše pravda*, 1990, accessed on http://www.zlin.estranky.cz/clanky/novy-zlin/nam_-t_g_-masaryka---zlinsky-prospekt-internatu.html
[212] Katrin Klingan, Kerstin Gust Eds. *A Utopia of Modernity: Zlín* (Verlag:Berlin). 2010.

single beds or bunk beds, one desk by the window, ten chairs, and ten closets.[213] They were often decorated with framed pictures of Jan and Tomas Bat'a, and occasionally Tomas Masarýk. Apart from white curtains at the window and the occasional flower vase on the desk, no other decorations were allowed.

The dormitories created a profoundly functionalist campus, with six thousand inhabitants living in a tightly packed area, within an easy walking distance to the factory. Life in this mini-city was characterized by strict rules, tight surveillance, and an almost non-stop schedule of events. Since the company viewed free-time as one of the major causes for immorality, the Young Men had a gruelling schedule. Their day consisted of work in the factory, school in the afternoon, exercise in the morning and evenings, and various classes at night in the dormitories, all of which were subject to routine inspection.

The steady increase in the company's involvement in the private affairs of its workforce corresponded with a steady increase in the methods of control developed for the Young Men and Women. One of these methods was a tight regulation of appearance. Students had specific outfits on special days in the Bat'a calender and a carefully watched dress code while in the factories. Likewise, the company regulated what students listened to. Radios, installed throughout the factory in the early 1930s, made their way into the dormitories in 1937 at Jan's order: "Put a special radio in all of the bedrooms so that we can speak to the Young Men after the curfew whistle." As the radios could not be turned off by the students, Young Men would have no place to escape the voice of the

[213] Stanislav Štětkář, Internát – Baťová škola práce. MZA- ZLÍN. AK 0/563/2. Pg 9.

company.[214] Regulating students' bank accounts was perhaps the most effective method of control of them all. In addition to mandating how much students saved in Bat'a owned accounts, and how much they earned in their factory work, guardians carefully monitored spending so as to eliminate frivolity. In fact, the vychovatels had five separate forms regarding their charges' finances they were required to keep track of. These consisted of a general account of all expenses and income, and specific forms about borrowing, lodging, school accounts, and wages.[215] If any money had been used improperly, such as the purchase of expensive jewelry, the student could be written up, and, as in the case of Alexander, possibly expelled.

Yet life in the dormitories produced a significant loyalty and nostalgia on the part of many who experienced it. Stanislav Štětkář, a Young Man from 1937 to 1941 has written perhaps the fullest account of life in the dormitories, though it remains unpublished.[216] In his memoir, he details a life almost constantly in movement, and with very little privacy. He is overwhelmingly positive about his time as a Young Man, as are most other memoirs about the experience. The strict discipline led to a life-long responsibility with money, Štětkář writes, and a solid work ethic. František Šumpela entered the BSP in 1934 and specialized in tanning. He quickly rose to the position of a manager and then general director, which allowed him the opportunity for considerable world travel. Later in life Šumpela became an outspoken advocate for the Bat'a philosophy, participating and organizing numerous events for the Club of Bat'a School

[214] June 15, 1937 Jan Bat'a to engineers Drkoš and Kovárník and directors Hradil and Jaroněk. MZA-ZLÍN K..1223 č. 192
[215] Školy – studíjní Ustav výchova prumyslového člověka. MZA-ZLIN K. 1192 č. 39.
[216] Stanislav Štětkář, Internát – Baťová škola práce. MZA- ZLÍN. AK 0/563/2.

Alumni.[217] For him and other former Young Men, the experience provided an iron discipline that served them well during the vicissitudes of the 20th century. Being a student in the BSP for many created a lifelong affection toward the Bat'a system and a nostalgia that has survived into today.[218]

Life in the dormitories did not create total conformity of course. Antonín Vavra, a young man from Strážnice who graduated from the BSP in 1930, was fired from the company in 1934 for insubordination. According to his vychovatel, when asked to write an essay about the principles of a Bataman for incoming students, Vavra replied "I am a Bataman, but I am not going to write this because it is stupid (blbost)."[219] There was also a steady stream of petty thefts. As the young students' schedules were highly predictable, thieves regularly pilfered through their valuables while they were at work. Many of these crimes proved impossible to solve. The thieves that were caught usually turned out to be students.[220] One of the worst of them, Rudolf Paták, a former Young Man from the neighboring village of Klečůvka, was caught by police after witnesses saw him trying to open a dresser in one of the rooms of a dormitory. Police later found over 6,000 Kč worth of stolen goods in his room at his parent's house.[221] For others, life as a Young Man and Woman did not produce outright defiance, but a deep ambivalence about the entire

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217 **"**Zemřel František Šumpela" http://batastory.net/cs/abs/
218 Ibid.
219 Personnel Card, Antonin Vavra. MZA-ZLÍN.
220 Denní rozkazy – Policejní úřady městská Zlína,. OZA-AMZ K.217 č.299
221 Ibid. Dec. 8, 1937.

experience. Pavla Kosatíkem, in an interview in 2002, commented that living as a Young Woman in Zlín "was terribly unfree, like the worst military."[222]

Life in the BSP, then, produced a complex array of memories. On one hand it allowed a generation of youth the chance to live, work, and study under the protection of a uniquely successful company - it was a way out of the poverty of rural life. On the other, students had to sacrifice privacy and a gamut of choices – sublimating their individuality.

FROM TOMAS TO JAN

From 1933, the company overhauled the BSP substantially to reflect both the growing power of the company as well as the change of chief executive. By 1936, students no longer went to class in the evening, but in the afternoon. The Young Men and Women had their evenings entirely filled by study and collective activities, such as singing, sports, and cleaning. Their lives were even more carefully monitored by their vychovatels and company regulations. Character became more important than in the past. The pamphlet for interested applicants in 1936 is indicative of this change, as it stressed physical health, cleanliness, and discipline to the rules of the school. "Successful work depends upon a healthy body and a quick spirit."[223] Ironically, the new rules were similar to the Soviet state's attempt to transform society, as the Bolsheviks sought to inculcate in their youth "punctuality, cleanliness, businesslike directness, polite modesty, and good,

[222] Madla Vaculíková "Ja jsem oves/ rozhovor s Pavlem Kosatíkem." *Máj* . Praha. 2002.
[223] Mladí muže. (1936) MZA-ZLÍN. K.1508 č. 6

but never showy manners".[224] The amplification of the company's social engineering program was the result of the untimely death of Tomas, which left the BSP in the hands of his half-brother Jan.

The transition from Tomas to Jan Bat'a had a direct effect on the lives of the Young Men and Women. While Tomas seemed to have cared largely about creating excellent skilled workers out of his young people, Jan tried to design a curriculum that would mold them into renaissance young moderns, capable of speaking four languages, dancing, painting, and even flying aircraft.[225] As early as 1936, Young Men and Women were required to put on a play "no less than twice a year."[226] Also receiving more emphasis was the idea of Young Men as general managers rather than expert workers. They were in 1936 expected to know "the entire layout of the factory by their third year" when they could then test into a special program for managers.[227] Due to these increased requirements, the BSP expanded into a five year program. Jan then further stratified the educational system by implementing the Tomášov School as well as the Private School for Foreign Language. Jan increasingly saw the BSP as the center for future upper management, whereas Tomas had looked at the school as a way to ensure a loyal workforce, both foreign and domestic. Both had in common the desire to propagate the ethics of what would come to be known as Bataism, as clearly the school was interested

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[224] Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
[225] The steady stream of increased expectations can be found in Ředitelství BŠP různé osobní záležitosti internátů 1936-39. MZA-ZLÍN K.1223 č.192.
[226] Zařidte kalendař. MZA-ZLÍN K.1027 č.14.
[227] Ibid.

in molding character from the beginning. Thus, while Tomas created the vychovatel system, Jan would expand and refine it into a high art.

The vychovatel was the key to the social engineering project of the BSP. These guardians did not have an easy job. "The vychovatel must be a strict father and a loving mother." Their day began at 6 a.m. when they were required to make sure the Young Men washed the "top half of their body" and brushed their teeth. After breakfast, they would arrive at the factory by 7:20, where they inspected the Young Men for appearance. Everyday these inspections were written down for future reference. As the Young Men began working at the factory, the vychovatels would meet between 7:20 and 8 to discuss any problems with their students. They would then walk back to the factories and check in on each of their charges to make sure they were behaving and keeping a tidy appearance and work space. At lunchtime they had to investigate "how much and how the young men eat." They also needed to make sure the Young Men left their tables clean after lunch. While the Young Men were in school, from 1:30 to 5, the vychovatels had their only free time. Afterwards, they arrived at the dormitories to make sure everyone ate dinner and studied. Then they went over attendance records and personal finances. After study time, they checked that everyone washed themselves and their shoes, and inquired about the health of everyone in their group. They were responsible for anyone arriving to work the next morning tired or disheveled. Thus, they carefully patrolled the hallways after lights out at 9:15 p.m. They could go home only when "their group is completely calm." Helping the vychovatels were "captains," Young Men selected to be the leaders of their sleeping quarters. They had the task of "keeping order and cleanliness" and

maintaining their room's "honor." Maintaining honor largely meant insuring that no alcohol, girls, or gambling went on in the room.[228]

According to the company's accounts, the guardians and their captain helpers were remarkably successful at their jobs. On a school wide inspection for cleanliness and order in 1939, for example, each of the 21 groups of Young Men in one of the dormitories gained a mark of 95% or higher. The remarkable success was the result of a policy of collective responsibility, and the company's ability to find highly disciplined men to become vychovatels. In fact, a former general, lieutenant, and captain could be found among the vychovatels.[229] Strict discipline was a clear priority.

Within a few years after Jan took over, company executives proclaimed the success of their education and work system.

> These boys have everything that we did not have.
>
> They work with the best machines…They learn under the careful guidance of specialist instructors, while for us there was only random and occasional supervision.
>
> Their working day, even while dividing their time between great educational possibilities is easily a quarter, even a third less than ours was. We hope that these ratios have changed the old spirit of doing things.[230]

In the midst of making such victorious statements, executives re-organized and expanded the BSP. In a speech at the Masarýk School on December 39, 1936, Jaromír

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[228] Mladí muže. (1936) MZA-ZLÍN. K.1508 č. 6.
[229] Svatopluk Jabůrek. http://batastory.net/cs/abs/vznik-smysl-a-uspechy-batovy-skoly-prace
[230] Jindřich Horák, „Úspěchy řemeslné výchovy v průmyslových dílnách" Zlín. October 11, 1937.

Hradil, the director of the schools, publicly launched the ambitious expansion program. "We want to give people a world-class education, and make them decisive and self-confident. We want young people to become individuals whose life and work will benefit Zlín, the republic and the entire world."[231] To further this education, Hradil announced that the BSP would go from a 3 to a 5 year school, that it would have smaller groups of instruction, that there would be more daily interaction with the educators, and that they would see an increase in physical training. These reforms coincided with a rising interest in Mussolini's Italy as well as an increased interest in the English public school model, both of whose virtues began to be extolled regularly in the Bat'a press by Jan.

The idea of using the English public school as a model for training future managers and engineers evolved over 1937 into the Tomášov School, which Jan Bat'a founded in 1938. There would never be more than 60 students in the program, as it was supposed to be even more elite than the BSP, a kind of executive training program for the best and brightest Young Men. Interestingly, women were not permitted as students in Tomášov. Their highest educational possibility remained as Young Women.

The adolescents picked for the inaugural class were a carefully selected group of outstanding students, and the company's expectations for them were tremendous.

> They will have to give a lot of sweat in order to reach their desired station. Just being in this institution does not assure them of a leadership role.
>
> In the Tomášov there will even be humor. Humor and joyful youth. So for example every student of this school must learn how to play tennis or cricket, golf

[231] "Prohloubení výchovy Batových mladých mužu". *Zlín*. Jan. 4, 1937, pg. 3.

and polo. They have to know how to fly a plane and drive a car – as well as a motorcycle and a pair of horses.

They have to master two languages outside of their mother tongue and one other moderately.

They have to be a person who is not proletariat in their feelings or in their thoughts, but one who believes in their own strength, in the strength of their character.

And they have to do all of these things on their own account.[232]

The most ambitious of all of the company's social engineering projects, the new leadership academy sought to engineer future leaders in the mold of an idealized modern renaissance man. Of course, the ideal needed to have a face to represent it. Tomas Bat'a's only child, Tomas Jr, became that face. As he began his life as a Young Man in the early 1930s, he came to be the embodiment of the Bat'a ideal: a sportsman, worker, and leader who spoke foreign languages and maintained a well-groomed appearance at all times.

The records from Tomášov's vychovatel Rudolf Hub, provide an intimate look at the lives of the best of the best. Hub's reports are, not surprisingly, filled with glowing reviews, and show a tight-knit group that had a remarkable work ethic and athleticism. The group regularly trounced other sports teams from the surrounding area, including teams of adult factory workers.[233] Their prowess was due to physical attributes used as criteria for acceptance, the closeness of the group, and an impressive opportunity for

[232] J.A. Bat'a "Podnikatelská universita," Zlin, November, 22, 1937.
[233] Minutes from the boys dormitory Tomášov (1940). MZA-ZLÍN k.1027 č.101.

physical activity; in one week in February of 1940 the group had a boxing tournament, a table-tennis tournament, and went skiing.[234]

For all of those young people in the area not accepted into the BSP, or who did not desire to attend such a school, education was also part of the grand Bat'a experiment at social engineering. For as the BSP grew, the company wrestled control of education away from the teacher's union and went about implementing what would become the most thorough overhaul of a municipal education system anywhere in Czechoslovakia.

THE PUBLIC EXPERIMENTAL SCHOOLS

Tomas and others, such as Dominik Čipera intense interest in wide-spread reforms in education and the establishment of new schools, whose administration would all be handpicked by Bat'a executives, did not subside with the establishment of the BSP. Undeterred by local resistance, the company found a way to go around the teacher's union by using its extensive contacts in the national government and by organizing a powerful Parents' Association to gain full control over education in Zlín. By 1938, Zlín and its immediate surroundings would have five "experimental" schools plus two industrial schools, a business academy, a private language school, a woman's trade school, and a music academy. In addition, the company built workshops and laboratories, two gymnasiums, nine libraries, and brought in over two hundred teachers, engineers, and even former military leaders to teach the town's youth.[235]

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[234] Ibid.

[235] Teacher Changes from 1936-1937. MZA-ZLIN K.1217 č. 161.

One of the more ingenious ways the company gained control over the schools in Zlín was through the Spolek Rodičů, Parents' Association, an organization founded during the height of the battle with the schoolmasters of Zlín. The Parent's Association, chaired by Tomas Bat'a, consisted of top executives of the company whose main goal was to deliver the school system into the hands of the company. They wanted to create a new type of relationship between parent and student, and a new way of discipline that did not involve the heavy-handed practices of the past, such as whippings and public humiliation in the classroom. Instead, the Parents' Association called for a type of education that encouraged individualism, freedom of thought, and, above all, taught skills which would be of immediate value to industry.[236]

The group found that the most efficient way to reform the system was with money. And spend the group did. For the 1935-36 school year, for example, the Parent's Association gave 156,000 crowns to city schools and individual teachers it found worthy of reward.[237] This was slightly over 10% of the city's entire budget for education. Moreover, the bonuses given to teachers were instrumental in raising them out of the modest salary of a Moravian schoolteacher, which meant Zlín could recruit the finest teachers in the country. Furthermore, by tying teacher's salaries to the Parent's Association, the company was able to gain leverage over teachers, making them de facto Bat'a employees.

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[236] Daňové přiznání Spolek rodičů ve Zlíně. MZA-ZLÍN K. 1189 č. 23.
[237] Ibid.

Another key strategy of the Batamen was to reach out to school reformers in Prague, which they did with considerable success. They were most successful in convincing Václav Příhoda, a professor of education at Charles University and long a voice for educational reform, to use Zlín as a testing ground for new ideas about education. Příhoda traveled to the United States in 1928 and came back with a scathing comparison between the Czechoslovak and American school systems. Primarily, Příhoda argued that the American system encouraged a type of student who asked questions, was encouraged to experiment, and enjoyed physical fitness. Very much in-line with what Tomas had argued for in 1925, Příhoda's report had a significant impact on the Ministry of Education and created a strong connection between educational reformers in Prague and Zlín. Like many other ideas implemented in Zlín, therefore, educational reform was initially modeled after the American educational system. Within one year of the publication of Příhoda's report, in 1929, support for Bat'a's educational reform could be found in all of the necessary places in Brno and Prague. Once the regional and national authorities signed off on Bat'a's so-called experimental school plan, the company had the leverage needed to overcome opposition from the teacher's union and establish the first experimental school in Czechoslovakia, Masarýk's Experimental Public School.[238]

The Masarýk Experimental School, which was entirely Bat'a funded, had the mission to change the entire country's educational system. The school's primary interest was to give students hands on experiments, almost exclusively in the sciences, that could

[238] Stanislav Vrána and Josef Cisař. *Deset let pokusné práce na měšťanských školách ve Zlíně 1929-39*. OZA-Zlín, AMZ.

prepare them for a life in modern industry. Students worked in chemistry laboratories, on electronics, machinery, and constructive geometry. Mathematics was heavily emphasized. In addition, the school had a noticeable increase in physical education compared with the municipal school's curriculum, which coincided with the curriculum at the BSP. The school also included the state mandated requirements in religion, Czech language, and history, though there is little evidence that instruction in these subjects was innovative.[239] Essentially, the company designed the curriculum to prepare the students of Zlín to excel in the hard sciences in order to make them ideal employees.

The experimental school grew along with the town. The school grew from 214 students in 1930 to 1218 by 1937.[240] This growth began causing problems with the school's lofty ideal to foster independent thinkers through close teacher student relationships, as classroom sizes swelled to well over 40.[241] As a result, there was an almost constant need for new teachers in Zlín, and city regulation in 1937 capped class sizes at 35. Eventually, the city council decided to divide the school and to create a new campus in 1940.

The few accounts from students that exist are almost entirely positive about their experiences in the experimental school. Jaroslav Kozlík's edited volume about the experimental schools, which is the only recent account of the school reforms, reveals widespread praise from both sexes about the schools' "democratic spirit" and openness. The director of the school, Stanislav Vrána, receives wide praise for his habit of asking

[239] Zpráva o činnosti pedagogického oddělení...(1935-38) MZA-ZLÍN k. 1190 č. 28.
[240] Numbers of pupils and their classes in the public high school, 1937 OZA-ZLÍN (AMZ) č727.
[241] Masarýková pokusná škola. OZA-ZLÍN (AMZ) č.715.

students to come up with their own solutions for problems and encouraging them to work on self-directed projects.[242] Unlike the students of the BSP, students in the Masarýk School went home in the afternoon, and did not have to account for their money or character outside of school. Of course, being in Zlín, they were still in a larger network of surveillance. Those whose parents worked for the company would have been familiar with personal inspections and company informants. Still, the education they received in the Masarýk School was a step above education in other parts of Czechoslovakia, which rarely could offer students a variety of laboratories and machines with which to train. There was also a noticeable lack of nationalist rhetoric associated with the school. For while official statements included tributes to Masarýk and the Republic, not one of the experimental school's many publications evoked the language of national struggle. Furthermore, foreign language instruction was a key component of the curriculum.[243] The company's educational philosophy created a unique student experience in the experimental schools, which seemed far more capable of producing a modern workforce than other municipal schools in Europe.

The Masarýk School was a part of a much larger project to educate a modern workforce. For while the Masaryk School offered a hands-on education for the youth, the company also went about educating its older employees. In the 1920s company education offered to seasoned workers was largely centered on reading groups and guest lectures. By the mid-1930s, though, Bat'a created a separate department for the education of

[242] Jaroslav Kozlík, Kapitoly o zkušenostech pokusných škol ve Zlíně z let 1929-1939. Přerov: Muzeum Komenského, 1996.

[243] The most comprehensive collection of the school's publications is found in the library of OZA-ZLÍN (AMZ) in the catalogue Školství věci.

employees, which strove to further the company goals to create the new industrial man by offering a stunning number of courses, lectures, and cultural evenings designed to refine employees.

To guide the workers who were too old to benefit from the myriad of schools in Zlín, the company established the Pedagogic Department in 1935. This department was headed by a former schoolmaster Antonín Grác, who was an unabashed Bataman in his ideas of the future. "We in Zlín feel very concretely and clearly that the purpose of life is to progress in many different ways towards the path of perfection. Illuminating human understanding and strengthening the collective will creates infinite progress in all fields of human endeavor and enterprise."[244] With their lofty goal of human perfection, the department went about offering a staggering number of "educational opportunities" for adults from 1935-39. In six months in 1938, for example, the department oversaw 183 events for 5924 people.[245] The courses were not offered for free, but at a nominal cost, which was typically 10 crowns for the course. These courses were overwhelmingly technical, with very few offerings in the liberal arts. It was as if the Batamen were not at all interested in teaching the past to their adult employees. Instead, modernity seemed to come from nowhere, founded on scientific principles and begun with the rationalization of industry and society. Still, the courses offered a company-controlled way for workers

[244] A. Grác. *První tři léta Pedagogického oddělení 1935-38*. MZA-ZLÍN K.1190 č. 28.
[245] Newspaper Clips about the Adult Education program. MZA-ZLÍN K.1190 č. 29.

to obtain a very affordable education on everything from "hygiene," to human behavior and hydroelectricity.[246]

Educational reforms extended all the way down to the youngest students as well, children between the ages of 3-6 who went to "nursery" schools. While the first of these schools opened in 1909, the Bat'a era saw six more nursery schools added from 1923-1939. The rapid expansion of these schools was the result of both a ballooning population as well as an increase in working mothers. With all things Bat'a, establishing new nursery schools met challenges. The first nursery school was located across the street from a distillery. Tomas, being a vocal champion of abstinence, was outraged by this and through a series of legal battles was able to take control of the distillery and tear it down.[247] The new nursery schools were committed to fostering a love for clean-living, and required a significant amount of outdoor and physical activities for their toddlers.

Interestingly, the nursery schools' statute changed very little when the Nazi authorities took over the schools in January of 1940. Using almost identical language, the 1936 and 1940 statutes put the nursery teacher's focus on physical activity, games, singing, Puppet Theater, and light garden work. All of these activities were to be done as a group.[248] There was also a strong emphasis on hygiene; a fundamental component of the company's program. From the earliest ages, the children of Zlín were to be clean and synchronized with their peers. The schools consistently received excellent reviews from

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[246] Ibid.

[247] Nursery school at the distillery. Mateřské školy 1909-1941 OZA-ZLÍN (AMZ) č. 719.

[248] "Requirements for a Nursery School Teacher." Mateřské školy, Okrésní zemský archiv – Zlín (Hereafter OZA-Zlín) Archiv města zlín (AMZ). č. 719

the school boards of Zlín as well as the regional authorities in Brno, who thought the schools "excellent in every way".[249]

The private school in Zlín, the Private Foreign Language School, was under the direct supervision of the company, which made it really another extension of the municipal educational system. Its purpose was to give certain elite members of the community the chance to immerse their children in foreign language instruction. At its founding in 1934, the four year school's languages of instruction were English, French and German.[250] Upon entering the school in the fifth grade, the student had to pick one of the languages and would thereafter receive almost all instruction in that language. The only courses that would be taught in Czech were Czechoslovak language, religion, civil affairs, and homemaking. In 1936, a total of 212 students were in the school, 86 in English, 32 in French, and 89 in German. These students would, of course, become excellent candidates for the Bat'a School of Work, which highly prized foreign language skills.[251] After the Nazi occupation, Jan Bat'a, who at that point had become the chairman of the regional schoolboard in Brno, revised the language program to focus on German. The chief teacher of English, John Crubb, from England was fired and soon arrested by the Gestapo.[252]

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[249]Regional inspection reports, from 1933-41. Mateřské školy, OZA-ZLÍN (AMZ). č.719.

[250] Interestingly, the charter for the school was carefully worded so that the regional schoolboard's nationalism would be appeased. The charter assured that the school would be run by a Czechoslovak and that all classes taught in Czech would be by a Czechoslovak. In addition, it promised that the teacher of German would be a Czechoslovak national. Soukromná měštánská škola, OZA-Zlín, Archiv Města Zlín. č. 735.

[251] Due to the state of the Bat'a archives, there is no way to know how many of these students actually became Young Men and Women.

[252] Soukromná měštánská škola, OZA, Archiv Města Zlína (AMZ). č. 735.

One year after the establishment of the Private Foreign Language School, the city created the Professional School for the Female Sex. The school recruited poor young women who "haven't had luck with their education."[253] These were women, sixteen and older, who had very little chance of making it into the School of Work or a local high school. The school functioned as a kind of auxiliary for the company's welfare program, as it strove to train women in childcare, home economics, cooking, and healthcare. The goal was to turn the future wives of workers into capable housewives. To do so the school offered three programs; a three month school of work in the home, a five month school of work in the home; and a two year program. For Ladislav Vlček, the director of the school, the purpose of the short three and five month programs was to provide "all of the girls and women who have not had luck in the women's schools with a chance to learn the basic knowledge and expertise needed to become managers of the modern household in the shortest amount of time possible."[254] The three month school offered a program almost entirely designed around taking care of children, while the five month program had a few extra courses in sewing, language, and physical fitness.

The Masaryk School, the new nurseries, the Professional School for the Female Sex, the Foreign Language School, and the adult education classes all served to create an atmosphere unique to Czechoslovakia, where self-improvement through company approved curriculum was available to almost all strata of society. By extending Bataism into local schools, the company tried to ensure that the populace would embrace its

[253] Odborná škola pro ženské povolání (1935-48) OZA-AMZ č. 734.
[254] Letter from Vlček to the city council, August 18,1938. Odborná škola pro ženské povolání (1935-48) OZA-Zlín, AMZ č.734.

values and be able to join its workforce, or become wives and mothers, with the necessary skills already in hand.

CONCLUSION

Education in Zlín evolved from a provincial affair to become a center of pedagogical reform in Czechoslovakia. Once the company took control over the municipality, executives began to steadily implement and experiment with new teaching methods, new schools, and new curricula. From one school for adolescents, age 14-18, in 1919, to six in 1938, opportunities for high school age students mushroomed in the interwar era.[255] These schools, though, were not meant to foster a kind of liberal arts mentality of broad-mindedness. They were designed to train future factory workers, managers, and engineers. As the company tried to remake the city into an extension of the factories, it also sought to remake the student in the mold of ideal future employees. And yet as the city grew into the eighth largest city in the country, and the company grew into the largest shoe manufacturer in Europe, creating the ideal employee became much more complex. Company executives found a need for an educational system that carefully arranged students based on potential, skill, and gender. As their technology continued to evolve and their company continued to expand, they increasingly saw a need to foster innovation, transnational contacts, and fierce loyalty. These needs facilitated a strikingly international atmosphere in Zlín, where young adults (almost entirely male)

[255] The schools in 1938 were the Bat'ova Škola Práce, Tomášov, Masarýková Škola, Veřejná městká odborná škola pro ženská povolání, Soukromna cizojazyčná škola,

from roughly twenty countries lived and worked alongside the locals.[256] They also facilitated a regimented experience where students had little free time, and very little privacy. In addition, education became increasingly stratified. There was a clear difference in experience between the students of the BSP and those of the public schools. Throughout the era we see three clearly demarcated educational experiences: those of the young men in the Bat'a schools, those in the public schools, and young women in the Bat'a Schools.

The dramatic rise in the number of spaces and opportunities for education led to the creation of a unique type of student – The Young Man and Woman – and a distinct type of education for the youth of Zlín during the Bat'a era. What characterized student life in Czechoslovakia's preeminent company town was its strong connection to the needs of a global industrial concern, its international character, and its pervasive network of surveillance. Bataism influenced education in Zlín by offering a new way of identification, that of the international company man and a new curriculum that centered on appearance, physical activity, industrial work, and language instruction. Students needed to learn to love the company, anticipate change, and be prepared to travel the world in order become Batamen. Women needed to refine their homemaking skills while mastering industrial machinery. Of course, the educational system in Zlín changed during the tumultuous interwar period, and was especially affected by differences in personality between Tomas and his half-brother Jan. After Tomas' death, Jan moved education towards an even more stratified, tightly regulated experience, and demanded

[256] This number of 20 comes from 1939 statistics collected by the company. MZA-ZLIN, K.1350 č.4.

more of the top students. Education in Zlín also became remarkably better funded and varied. By 1938 a high school age student had five schools to choose from, most of them in brand new functionalist buildings. Still, many of the principles which formed the basis of the Bat's educational agenda remained in place from 1925 to 1940. So, how successful was the company in forming the new industrial Bataman? While impossible to answer in quantitative terms, the Bat'a educational experience did instill a fierce loyalty among its alumni, at least among many of the Young Men. It also created an educational system that caught the attention of many teaching and learning experts in Prague. Perhaps most remarkable, the drive to train an ideal industrial workforce laid the foundations for education in the town to the present day: The Masarýk School remains the high school for the town, the dormitories are inhabited by students, now mostly college aged, who attend Tomas Bat'a University, which excels in technology and economics.

Gone is the vychovatel system, the starch uniforms of the BSP, and the rigid educational differences between the sexes. And though the aging members of the ABS and their vocal supporters continue to promote student life in the Bat'a era, waxing nostalgically about its financial stability and discipline, it is unlikely that the students who live in their old dormitories would accept such a life.

Chapter 5: Crime and Punishment in the Kingdom of Shoes: Policing Bat'a's Zlín, 1923-1938

On November 25, 1937, thirteen uniformed officers, two plainclothes officers, and one "assistant officer" patrolled the public spaces of Czechoslovakia's preeminent company town. All of them were white, Czech-speaking men. All but one was between the ages of 25 and 40, and had an average of four and a half years' experience on the force. Their day was typical; the men tracked down beggars, arrested a "professional hobo", wrote up reports of stolen items from the workers' dormitory, and "shoved out" a twenty year old male from the city for crimes unknown.[257] At the end of the day, when filing the daily report, police commissioner Jaroslav Durdík added a slight reprimand to those who brought in an incarcerated individual the day before and did not immediately file a report with the chief social inspector. [258]

Meanwhile, five men under the employ of the Bat'a Company walked through the residential and commercial spaces of the town, "visiting" workers' families in their two-story semi-detached homes, listening to conversations in the street, and carefully marking down their observations. These men, the personal inspectors (osobní inspektory), took notes on everything from carpets to literature that day, remarking on family relationships and neighborhood gossip.[259] On the front-line of the company's drive to engineer Batamen and women, their job was to carefully watch for signs of any transgression of the Bat'a ideals of sobriety, loyalty, cleanliness, frugality, and industriousness. Furthermore, they were expected to report on transgressions of a gender order, constructed from traditional Moravian paternalism as well as Midwestern values (Bat'a's inspiration was, after all, Henry Ford), letting company executives know of illicit affairs,

[257] J. Durdik. 11/25/1937. Statní Okresní Archiv Zlín-Archiv Města Zlína (AMZ) K 217 č. 299.
[258] Ibid.
[259] Osobní Oddělení, 11/25/1937. Moravský Zemský Archiv Brno-Pracoviště Zlín (MZA-ZLIN). K 0 č.37.

family discord, and other marital problems among their workers. Their reports could lead to the loss of one's home, job, and residence card, however, they mostly served as roaming counselors, giving out advice, trying to save marriages, and doling out money to workers' families in need.[260] Their work was largely concerned with longtime, skilled workers who were privileged by the company; most workers did not live in the idealized semi-detached company houses that the personal inspectors visited. The majority of the workforce lived in large dormitories, under the even more watchful gaze of building and floor managers, who had twenty-four hour access to every room, and a mandate to remove all workers who drank, had sex, or broke curfew.[261] In addition to all of these agents of surveillance, the company had two hundred plus informants, who, for various rewards, reported on disloyal workers.[262]

Clearly, by 1937 the Bat'a Company had turned Zlín into one of the most tightly regulated towns in interwar Europe, where the task of policing the social order was spread throughout the community and informants, everyday inspections, and frequent expulsions had become normalized. Furthermore, the ability of the company to "own" space, to encourage self-regulation through wage and housing incentives, and to regulate their workforce with technologies of control such as time cards, personnel cards, and radios, coupled with the fact that the company remained under the administration of state authorities in Brno and Prague, led to a markedly non-violent (at least in the physical sense) society. Indeed, the city had one of the lowest violent crime rates in Czechoslovakia, and, after sifting through some seventeen years of company and city

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[260] In 1937, for example, 68% of their cases concerned financial support, wage issues, and requests from workers. MZA-ZLIN K. 0 č.37.

[261] For an account of the lives of the workers in the dormitories see Ondřej Ševeček, *Zrození Baťovy průmyslové metropole: Továrna, městký prostor a společnost ve Zlíně v letech 1900-1938*. České Budějovice, 2009.

[262] Informants. MZA-ZLIN K 1029 č. 14.

police records, my research discovered only three cases of police brutality.[263] Hence, as Zlín became Europe's preeminent utopian industrial town, its policing became increasingly sophisticated, using surveillance in place of force. And yet, was this surveillance network effective in eliminating dissent? Was Zlín really so controlled?

For on that same day, one would likely find communists printing illegal fliers in cramped apartments, drunks gathered at bars, including Máca's notorious watering hole, workers showing up late to the factories, vagrants begging, people engaged in scandalous affairs, and Roma playing "pod skořapku" (the shell game) on the street.[264] In addition, prostitutes plied their trade in unlicensed rooms and groups of the unemployed slept in makeshift camps in the forests.[265] Thus, no matter how omnipresent the company seemed, the multivalent desires of the human soul muddied the Bat'a executives' drive to create the "new industrial man."

While Bat'a's attempts at social engineering can hardly be classified as brutal, particularly in the context of interwar Europe, they were nonetheless a part of a global project to remake society through "rationalization." For the company developed and tried to enforce a way of life through the use of statistical, administrative, political, and social technologies, often disregarding local practices and knowledge. Zlín, therefore, was part of a widespread movement to "scientifically" administer society, a movement which crossed ideology and ocean and had tremendously detrimental consequences.[266]

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263 From the variety of police records in the AMZ, the only records on police brutality before the Nazi occupation can be found in Bezpečností stráž města Zlína- personální záležitosti, č. 635.

264That all of these activities were going on that day is an assumption of the authors based on evidence from 1937. For Bat'a reports on tardy workers see MZA-ZLIN 1937 For a report on Roma and the shell game in 1937, see AMZ Trestní Spisy K 579 č. 1118, for Máca v. Bat'a, of which more will follow, see AMZ č. 860.

265 Trestní Spisy. Jan Martinec. AMZ K 580 č. 1118.

266 For three excellent examples of modernity and social engineering, see Anthony Giddens, T*he Consequences of Modernity.* Stanford, 1990.; James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, 1998.; Detlev Peukert, "The Genesis of the 'Final Solution' from the Spirit of Science" in *Reevaluating the Third Reich.* New York, 1994.

Indeed, the nefarious effects of high modernism, such as environmental devastation, cultural repression, and mono-form architecture, which have been well documented, were all present in the workings of the Bat'a concern. And yet, the majority of scholars of social engineering projects have been interested in state projects, not those of international businesses (this is especially true for the interwar period). In addition, few western scholars have looked at Eastern Europe as being a laboratory for high modernism in the interwar years, and even fewer realize that one of its chief architects, Le Corbusier, worked for several years on Bat'a projects.[267]

On the other hand, among the ever-increasing work being put out by historians of the Bat'a phenomenon, which have revealed a great deal about the company, few have looked into the company's interventions in everyday life. Communist and left-leaning journalists and historians have produced several accounts over the years about the exploitation of the workforce and the heroic "red-cells" of workers in the company. Their accounts, though, ignore both agency on the part of the individual and the role of civic crime in everyday life. Indeed, much of their work reduces experiences in Zlín to Orwellian description. Bohumil Lehar, the preeminent scholar of Bat'a during the communist period of Czechoslovakia, for example, argued that "the police watched everyone who read a communist newspaper."[268] Of the recent scholars who have taken a more sophisticated approach, such as Peter Szcepanik, the contradictory behaviors of both managers and workers are left out in order to present a tidy narrative of the

[267] Le Corbusier was commissioned to design a Bat'a exhibition in 1935, drafted a long-term urban plan for Zlín, and by all accounts, was deeply impressed with the city. "Zlín is luminous phenomenon. I have travelled all over the world, but here I am in a new world." See, *The Bata Phenomenon: Zlin Architecture 1910-1960* (Zlín: 2009).

[268] Bohumil Lehár, *Dějiny Baťova Koncernu, 1894-1945* (Praha: 1960) 217. From the period see *BATA BANKROT* (Praha, 1932).

development of a "society of control."[269] I am interested, then, in exploring the limits of the company's control within its utopian town, the spaces where this highly advanced system of surveillance did not go, or, was beaten back. In doing so, I aim to explore the limits of high modernism to provide a more nuanced account of life in the "utopia of modernity."

The rise of the Bat'a social order began in 1923, when company founder Tomas Bat'a, along with forty four other employees, won the municipal elections, gaining power from Social Democrats (the Communist Party was not formed in Zlín until the next year). Running as *Batovci* (Bat'a people), they promised an end to politics and an investment in the town's ailing infrastructure.[270] Their leader, Bat'a, already becoming a father figure in the company, was to extend his role, protecting Zlín from the mire of political parties, and in turn lifting up its citizens into a better age. Upon entering office it became apparent that keeping Zlín safe to the *Batovci* meant targeting four groups: the communists, the vagrant-beggars, the drunks, and "loose women." For these groups threatened Bat'a's new person who was to be above politics, hard-working, sober, and monogamous. To enforce this morality, the *Batovci* began with a police force of six uniformed city police, no personal inspectors, no health inspector, and very little municipal regulation of business, alcohol, or prostitution.[271] Their plans, however, did not match the modesty of their resources.

One of the first goals of the company was to temper radicalism in both town and factory. Bat'a, who had earlier experimented with unions, had become an ardent Fordist

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[269]Petr Szcepanik, "The Aesthetics of Rationalization: The Media Network in the Bat'a Co. and the Town of Zlín" in Zlín*: A Utopia of Modernity* (Zlín: 2009).

[270] For a thorough account of the election, see *Naše volby* (Zlín: 1925).

[271] While the city council did have the authority to restrict both business and liquor licenses, they did so sparingly in the lean years between 1919-1923. Rather, most of the city council's energy was spent levying taxes on the major enterprises of the town, specifically Bat'a, and building a relatively expensive town hall. Městká rada protokol. AMZ K65 č .1. 1924.

by 1923, and was convinced that unions led to disloyalty and disorder. In addition, local rivalries between Tomas Bat'a and the leftist city council before 1923, which involved taxes and demands for employment, amplified his firm anti-socialist stand. A position which led to the banning of all unions from the factory in 1920 and creating his own, company sponsored May Day rally in 1923, which would eventually become the largest May Day rally in all of Czechoslovakia.[272] From the beginning of the Bat'a Company's drive to create a company town, then, the communists were the arch-villain of the Bat'a ethos. The company put communists on trial for slander at least forty two times in the interwar years.[273] The threat though, was real, as communist activists continually wrote scathing critiques of the Bat'a system, infiltrated the ranks of the workers, and eventually managed to put Bat'a on the Communist International's list of most exploitive enterprises. While the back-and-forth between the two groups could fill a book, the focus here is on a few examples representative of the local interactions between communist activists in Zlín and their far more powerful Bat'a sponsored adversaries. By doing so, I hope to touch upon the ways in which communists were marginalized and repressed, but at the same time how they were able to maintain a constant underground presence.

[272] *Lidové listy*. May 8, 1931.
[273] *Sdělení-Zlín*. 1923-1940.

Figure 3.1. A copy of the December 1932 Baťovák, an illegal newspaper printed sporadically throughout the 1930s, encouraging workers to strike.

BAT'A VS. COMMUNISM

Unlike other marginalized groups, like the Roma, the communists produced a large body of material on their experiences and problems within Zlín. Alongside extensive police and company reports on their actions, the communists' own writings reveal a small group of men and women under tight surveillance, often at the edges of

society, whose struggle against the company often lasted for years and was marked by intense moments of conflict.[274] Their reports, when looked at in conjunction with company and municipal documents, show that particularly in the 1930s, when Czechoslovakia began restricting Communist Party activities, Zlín officials, who were company officials after all, used every available resource to uncover leftists and remove them from the kingdom of shoes. And yet, though mightily diminished from their high point in 1922 when they controlled city government, communists remained active in the city.

On June 20, 1934, police, acting on a tip from a company informant, entered the apartment of Antonie Hřívová. There they found her sister, the "known communist activist" Růžena Urbancová with a bundle of illegal pamphlets. Both sisters were arrested.[275] The police collected the pamphlets, placed them on file, and notified both the company and the authorities of Urbancová's legal residence in Uherské Hradište.[276] The pamphlets were none other than the *Bat'ovák*, a paper which ran off and on throughout the 1930s, providing locals with a communist critique of the Bat'a system. Written for the average worker, the paper, or pamphlet, strove to amplify potential sources of discord in the Bat'a workers' daily lives.[277] The two most common attacks found in the *Bat'ovák* concerned the pace of work at the factories, which was argued to be inhumanely fast, and the tight regulation of employee's personal lives, particularly young workers. The

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274 For criticisms from the Left outside of Czechoslovakia, see Philipp Rudolph, *Der Unbekannte Diktator*, Thomas Bat'a (Vienna: 1928).
275 Trestní Spisy, 1924-48 Růžena Urbancová. AMZ č. 1118.
276 Ibid.
277 The Minister of the Interior declared the Bat'ovak illegal in September of 1931 under the new Defense of the Republic Law. Národní Archiv, TS-IČ Baťovák. K.4 č. 32.

Bat'ovák was perhaps the most circulated of all the leftist anti-Bat'a material in Zlín, and its presence constantly worried the authorities.[278]

As the above case illustrates, one of the most common ways the police and the company tried to root out communists was through keeping track of individuals' personal relationships. The police built a large database of suspected communists by frequenting rallies held in the region, making reports for all persons caught with leftist material, and using Bat'a Company information regarding locals' political affiliations (and vice versa). They then checked new arrivals and new potential Bat'a employees with their database. If a person's parents or siblings were suspect, then they would not be hired by the company, nor given a residence permit by the city.[279] If the new arrival was suspected of being friends with a communist, the police usually began an investigation into the person's past, contacting authorities at their places of residence and sending plainclothes officers to follow them through the city. Likewise, if a person had visited the Soviet Union, they went on the watch list, and were not likely to find employment in town.[280] Finally, reports by local informants could also open a case against a suspected political undesirable. Some cases proved nothing more than false gossip, as when the police investigated Václav Berka after the company received a letter from an ex-lover that falsely suggested he was a communist activist.[281] Still, the threat of denunciation, and the real danger of losing one's job through association kept socialists isolated, as few Zlínians wanted to be friends with people who could get them expelled from the town.

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[278] In 1936, for example, copies turned up on the person of Communist representative Jan Martinec, prompting a three house search among his known associates in Zlín. AMZ Trestní Spisy. K579 č. 1118.
[279] Among the many examples of guilt through familial connection, see the personnel cards of Anna Čevelová, Bohumíla Polašková, and Jan Kotas, Kartotéky KSČ. MZA-ZLÍN K1032 č.17.
[280] Josef Vancura, personnel card, MZA-ZLIN K1095 č.17.
[281] Václav Berka. Kartotéky KSČ MZA-ZLIN K 1032. I found eighty seven other cases of anonymous informants turning in suspected communists in the police archives in the AMZ.

In the end, as the power of the company rose, communist influence, and its ability to marshal any forces of opposition conversely fell. In fact, in 1936, after the Communist Party requested space to hold its May Day rally, the city told its representative that they could have "the bus stop on Zarámí Street."[282] After sending in several letters of protest against this marginalization, the Party held its rally, drawing a handful of supporters and a nearly equal number of police who, after one hour, requested the small crowd to disperse, which it did. In essence, communism had been effectively forced into the shadows of the kingdom of shoes. Activists were closely followed by the agents of the Bat'a surveillance network, and the communist critique could be found only on the very fringes of society, yet still to be found.

Perhaps most illustrative of this resiliency is found that same year of 1936 when Communist Party members began holding meetings in secret camps in the woods around the town. There, they set-up a printing press for their *Bat'ovák* and collected a socialist library of sorts. Indeed, it would have been the only place in Zlín that a curious worker could borrow a copy of the *Communist Manifesto*. Their shacks, three in all, lasted several months and attracted, at least by police estimates, some fifty people from the town.[283] What seems to have broken their secrecy was not an informant in their midst but the fact that the head of the personnel department, Vincenc Jaroněk, read in a confiscated copy of Baťovák that meetings were taking place in the woods. He then ordered the police, a strong testament to the company's control over the police force, to search the woods around Zlín, going all the way into the ethnic region of Slovácko if necessary.[284]

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[282] Tábory Lidu. AMZ K.433 č. 962.
[283] AMZ K579 č. 1118.
[284] Police Letter to Jaroněk, AMZ K579 č. 1118.

The camps, though found, represent both the shadowy fate of socialist activists and their continued ability to present a radical alternative to the Bat'a system.

However, while clearly thought of as an alternative to the men and women of the time, was the Bat'a system so different from what was going on in the Soviet Union? For while it is tempting to celebrate the underground movement of socialists fighting against a giant corporation, ultimately these activists, whether conscious of it or not, were championing an eerily similar system in the Soviet Union. For communists were fighting against a system built on the principles of Taylor and Ford, while the Soviet Union was simultaneously trying to implement Fordist and Taylorist techniques in its factories.[285] Furthermore, the Soviet policing of the social order had striking similarities to the techniques used in Zlín, using personnel cards, home inspections, and expulsions as ways to uphold a utopian social order that celebrated hard-work, sobriety, technology, and loyalty.[286] Indeed, Jan Bat'a once commented, "we are decisive and strict firing untrustworthy employees like Soviet Russia."[287] And though not the same system, the Soviets too were interested in the rationalization of production and of intervening in people's lives to build a new industrial society. In essence, communists in Zlín were trying to throw off one version of high modernism for another. Still, at the very least, the Bat'a version of high modernism had to make significant compromises, even within its utopian space, as regional authorities, townspeople, and even radicals prevented the company from realizing its most extreme ambitions.

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[285] See Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: 1995).
[286] For the clearest work to date on the Soviet civil police see David Shearer, *Policing Stalin's Socialism: Repression and Social Order in the Soviet Union, 1924-1953* (New Haven: 2009).
[287] J. Bat'a "Nevěrní lidé." *Zlín*, 8/16/1937.

BAT'A VS. ALCOHOL

While the Bat'a system was mostly successful over time at locating, marginalizing, and removing communists and socialists from their utopian company town, they failed to win against another perceived enemy of their new society, alcohol. For, while the Batamen saw drunkenness as being both unproductive and a sign of the backward past, they were never able to stop their workforce from drinking, nor businessmen making a profit from it. Of course, as the Temperance movement had successfully ushered in the era of Prohibition in the United States, Bat'a's actions were far from exceptional in a global sense. The founding of Abstinence Societies was happening all over the world. However, in Moravia, a society with a long tradition of alcoholic consumption, Bat'a's temperance movement was radical. Few people, even when encouraged by job prospects to do so, made the commitment to quit. Even members of the upper management were known to drink. Tomas Bat'a himself drank beer occasionally.[288] The abstinence movement in Zlín, therefore, was led by men who looked at it largely as a way to increase worker productivity, and workers largely ignored it.[289]

On March 1, 1924, after only three months in power, Tomas Bat'a ran a public denunciation of a drunk in the company, and soon to be city, newspaper. "This is a warning to all citizens that Karel Wernberger, in a drunken stupor, behaved in an offensive manner, threatening women on a public road and deriding children. Because of this I ask all citizens, especially pub owners, not to provide any intoxicants to him either

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[288] Fotoarchiv, T. Bat'a at Autoclub, 1931. MZA-ZLIN K. 1. č. 4.

[289] Tomas Bat'a, convinced of the evils of alcohol sometime around the middle of the 1920s, started his own temperance movement and began to use his significant power as both mayor and chief executive to rid Zlín of alcoholism. Within five years of its founding, the Abstinence Club stopped holding weekly meetings, and eventually disbanded altogether in 1936. It seems, that for new chief Jan Bat'a, who took over after his half-brother's death in 1932, abstinence was to be a personal commitment, and much like political criminals, alcoholics were to be dealt with outside of the public eye, watched, studied, and expelled with little if any publicity.

for sale or for free."[290] This public shaming of a drunk marked the beginning of a long campaign to marginalize not only alcoholics, but any kind of social drinking within the city. And yet, this excerpt also hints at the still embryonic state of the Bat'a disciplinary system. For, essentially, the drunk's punishment was to be a public affair, meted out as a community.

Likewise, Bat'a asked the public to participate in the razing of "old Zlín" throughout the 20s by voting his party back into office and coming together to boycott certain establishments. For, the Batovci connected the crumbling facades of older buildings with the numerous bars and pubs scattered through the town. They were relics of a different age. In 1930, when the owner of a bar next to a newly built school refused to sell for less than 4 million crowns, the company asked all citizens to boycott the establishment.[291] Within a few months, the owner had sold and the building was torn down.

However, the company was not always so successful. In one of the most astounding political setbacks the company had in the interwar period, a committed hotelier/pub owner named Antonin Máca fought the town council over two and a half years, through the courts, press, and public opinion. It began in 1927, when Máca approached the city council to get a building permit for a hotel and pub. He was denied, the council citing that his pub would be too close to an already existing pub, and too close to the Sokol hall.[292] Máca then petitioned the regional authorities in Uherské Hradište, who also denied his request. At that point, Máca got much more involved and began attending city council meetings. He applied for a permit yet again and again was rejected;

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290 *Sdělení*, March 1, 1924, p.9.
291 A. Cekota, *Zlín*, September 6, 1930.
292 Máca vs. Bat'a. AMZ C. 860

only now the council explained in much greater detail the reasons of their decision. "Today's Zlín has many young men and women workers and the administration has to look after them so that they do not suffer any moral harm."[293] The moral argument had little affect on Máca, who then once again went to regional authorities, only this time to the Moravian regional authorities in Brno. There, the case was sent back to Uherské Hradište. Only this time the regional council sent a representative to Zlín to investigate both sides of the case. When the investigator returned to Uh. Hradište, he brought a map with all of the bars and pubs in Zlín, which showed that in a rapidly growing town of around 18,000, there were only sixteen purveyors of alcohol.[294] Convinced of the illegitimacy of the Bat'a argument, the regional council overturned the city's ruling; Máca would have his pub and hotel. Bat'a representatives were furious. They officially protested the decision, ran a front page article about the immorality of Máca, and tried to ask citizens to join in another boycott.[295] This time, though, the boycott failed; Máca's establishment opened with a solid clientele and has remained open to this day. Thus, by going outside of the municipal authorities, an opponent of Bat'a successfully limited the company's reach into everyday life.

Perhaps because of this public setback, the company's approach to alcohol gradually gave way to a more exclusionary, private approach. In the 1930s, when the aforementioned personal inspectors would enter workers' apartments, interview their spouses and neighbors, they would make a report on workers' personnel cards (*osobní kartoteky)* if suspected of a predilection for drink. These cards became essential to any employees' longevity or upward mobility within the firm, and a question of alcoholism

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[293] November 16, 1928. City council resolution. AMZ č. 860.
[294] SOA-Zlín Okresní archiv. K.124 č. 802.
[295] *Zlín*. February 12, 1930.

often meant the end of one's chance for promotion.[296] Yet even among workers, the company's attempts at a temperance movement failed. For, ultimately, the purveyors of alcohol and their customers pushed back hard against Bat'a's attempt to control the flow of liquor in Zlín, and employees drank in spite of any possible reprimand at work. In a company town that pushed total abstinence, drinking became a way of regaining self-control.

BAT'A VS. PROMISCUITY

Similar to the company's fight against alcohol was its commitment to expel prostitutes and promiscuous women who "disturbed the peace." Much like the campaign against alcoholics, we see a community project to enforce a certain morality give way to a "scientific" approach that studied bodies and tried to remove them from the general population when found dangerous.

And yet, like with communism and alcoholism, the authorities' attempts to enforce a rigidly conservative sex life failed. Beginning with the case of a young woman removed from the city for having an affair with an older man and ending with several case studies of prostitutes, what follows is a brief examination into the policing of sex.[297] Through the prosecution of these cases, the further development of the Bat'a surveillance network can be traced and attitudes about sex explored.

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[296] For examples of alcoholism affecting employment, see Osobní Oddělení MZA-Zlín K.0 Č37.

[297] While prostitution was never outlawed before the creation of Czechoslovakia, it was up to the municipal and regional authorities to determine its legality. Not surprisingly, prostitution was against the law in Zlín, and no sanctioned brothels existed. For a history of prostitution in Czechoslovakia, see Petr Hulinský, *Z dejin pražské prostituce* (Praha 2009).

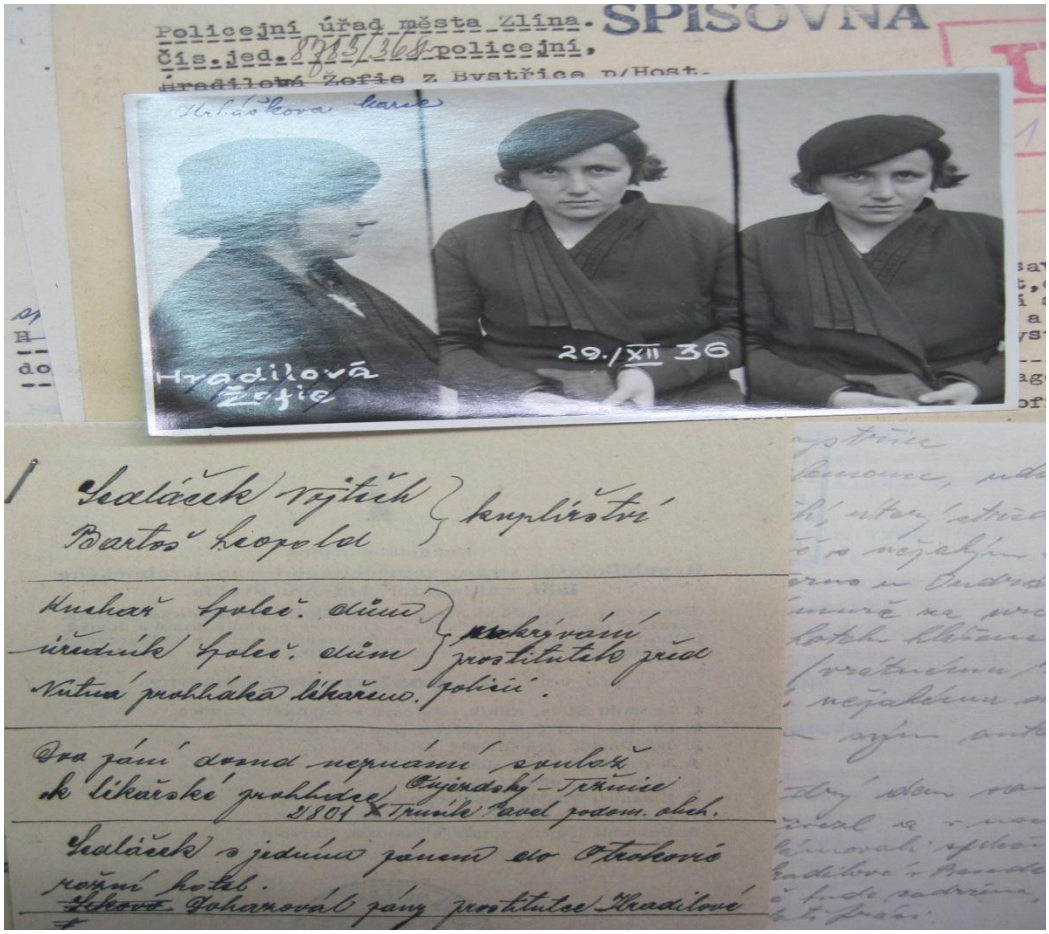

Fig. 3.2 Marie Urbášková's police file (erroneously named Žofie Hradilová).

The story of Marie Urbášková reveals the efforts spent to control women's bodies and people's sex lives, and the ability of individuals to thwart these efforts. Urbášková's case began when Jan Daněk, the most highly regarded of all undercover police agents, was in the cafe Beseda on December 28, 1936. There he recognized a woman whom he thought was named Žofia Hradilová, known to him for "sitting with random men and then taking them later in the night to pubs to fuck for money."[298] He also suspected that she carried a venereal disease, which allowed him by law to arrest her for inspection. He

[298] M. Urbášková. Trestní spisy. AMZ K518 č.1118.

placed her under arrest as she got up to leave the cafe, searching her wallet.[299] Once under investigation, Hradilová, nee Urbášková, cooperated with authorities by giving them the names of everyone she had slept with recently, whom they began to track down in order to examine them for sexually transmitted diseases. More interestingly, she confessed to a story of how she became a prostitute in Zlin, claiming that while looking for legitimate work, she was brought into the business by two local women and three men who set her up in a hotel in a nearby town. There she contracted gonorrhea. The police sent her to the hospital in Olomouc, and tried to contact her city of residence. It was then that they discovered she was someone else, twenty year old Urbášková, who was wanted all over the country for swindling and theft.[300]

Within the one narrative of Ludmila, we see both the intrusive power of a high modernist project, as well as the limits of this project. For, while Ludmila's sex life became a matter of public concern and the Batovci banished her for ten years, she returned unknown to the authorities and lived what seemed to be a normal life for an entire year before being recognized. She defied her punishment, and, in a sense, got away with undermining the company town's morals.[301] With Marie, we see the same interventionist approach, as she became known to police in a very short time, though under a false identity. Anecdotally, her quick debut on the authorities' watch list suggests that the surveillance network in Zlín was much stronger than that of all of the other places where she had swindled. Her story also suggests that the police in Zlín could be easily led astray on false tips, detaining people based on unreliable witnesses for a most personal inspection.

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[299] Ibid.

[300] Ibid.

[301] A similar story is that of Anna Tvarůžková whose having sex in a parking lot at a dance became the focus of a two month police investigation. A. Tvarůžková. Trestní spisy. AMZ K.581 Č.1118

On the opposite side of the spectrum, Bat'a managers were also under the tight surveillance of the company and also frequently acted outside of Bat'a morality. For the imperative for efficiency and standardization within the managerial class existed within the infinite diversity of the human spirit. Bat'a managers often quit because they "needed to explore other possibilities." They fooled around with subordinates, got involved in elaborate skimming schemes, and even dared to keep an untidy shop. Through the myriad of examples of management acting out of line, the unwritten grey areas between the ideals and the rules reveal themselves.

In cases of illicit affairs, the company often did not fire their managers, particularly if they were successful, but preferred demotion. In fact, out of twenty-one cases found from 1936-1938 of improper relationships between managers and employees, twelve managers were fired immediately for their actions.[302] The others were either demoted, their partners transferred or let go. In each case a male manager had become involved with a female employee. One case, that of Josef Tillburger and Eta Ollarková is especially indicative of the space between the ideal and the reality, and between policy and practice.

Tillburger was the manager of the Bat'a retail store in Zvolen, a medium sized town in central Slovakia. Ollarková worked in the sales department in Zvolen, while her brother Robert was the manager of the sales department in Čadca, a Slovakian town on the border of Moravia and Poland. When the company inspector traveled to Čadca for his normal quality control check, he was told by Robert that his sister was not at work in Zvolen but rather back in her hometown because she "had been accused of causing strife in a marriage and of being a whore." Upon further investigation, the inspector discovered

[302] Osobní odděleni. MZA-ZLÍN K. 0 č. 31-38.

that Ollarková had recently attempted suicide by way of a scalpel after being confronted by Tillburger's wife after becoming suspicious. The inspector asked Ollarková to return to Zlín and make a detailed report of the incident, which she did. He then traveled to Zvolen to confirm her report. Eventually, the inspector produced an account of the affair, including the circumstances of their first sexual encounter (Tillburger's wife was at a spa), and handed it over to the personnel department, which decided to transfer Ollarkova to the shop in Bratislava and demoted Tillburger to a "manager without personnel" in Spišské Podhradie.[303]

Hundreds of other such examples of improper behavior exist within the records of the Personnel Department, which illustrate the oftentimes wide space between the ideal and the reality even for those who were supposed to be the embodiment of Bat'a ideals. Managers, like beggars and tramps, went afoul of the morality of the company; only they were rarely punished by police authorities.[304] Instead, they were subject to a much greater level of scrutiny by the company's personal inspectors and executives who sought to ensure that managers conformed to the company's morality.

BAT'A VS. TRAMPS AND ROMA

While cases of moral policing and political repression were routine in interwar Zlin, they did not occupy nearly as much time for the police as did "beggars, vagrants, gypsies." For, by the 1930s the mundane act of begging had come to be seen as a grave social illness which weakened the body politic. This mentality coincided with the Great Depression, as hundreds of unemployed men and dozens of women arrived in Zlín each week in search of work. Their presence led to a certain type of siege mentality among the

[303] Osobní odděleni. MZA-ZLÍN K 0 č. 37.
[304] Osobní odděleni. MZA-ZLÍN.

upper management of company and town, who saw their utopia as being threatened by a large influx of desperate people. Their chosen way to deal with these perceived social threats was expulsion. For, as Zlin's population was almost entirely from elsewhere, and the residency statutes of Czechoslovakia allowed local authorities to expel anyone who did not have a local residency permit, it was easy for authorities to arrest and send off anyone caught begging. In 1937, for example, the police expelled 208 people; all of them labeled "beggars, vagrants, gypsies."[305] In the Bat'a mentalité, these people represented the irrational, lazy, and backwardness of Czechoslovak society and had no place in the future.

In the context of this rationalized discourse, authorities perceived Roma (whom they referred to as cikáni, or gypsy) as being especially threatening. To them, the Roma represented transience, spontaneity, superstition, and sexual depravity. In addition, and perhaps most frustrating to the leaders of the company and town, they were unknowable. As will be seen, Roma groups were almost impossible for the authorities to track, register, and control. Indeed, the state issued identification cards, which all Czechoslovak citizens were required to carry, would often be swapped between Roma, leading to much confusion.[306] Even when they did have the correct identification, their histories were only made legible to the authorities through criminal records. The company had no informants, or personal inspectors among the Roma, who typically lived in camps outside of town. Thus, the authorities had no way of knowing the skills, experiences, or politics of people of Roma descent. As a result of this profound culture clash, the company hired almost no Roma, the city often refused to allow them residence permits, and they were de facto second class citizens, with a substantial effort made to drive them out of the utopian

[305] Denní rozkazy 12.1.1937-12.31.1937. Policejní úřady městká Zlína. AMZ K217 č. 299.
[306] One such story is found in the police record of Josefa Danielová, trestní spisy. AMZ K580 č.1118.

space of Zlín.[307] They were a striking exception to the purported cosmopolitanism of the company and their social alienation suggests that despite the company's claims of rationality, authorities retained a significant dose of local prejudice. In sum, the Roma way of life became criminalized in the kingdom of shoes.

While the authorities consistently viewed the "gypsy" camps with consternation and went to some lengths to harass them out, Roma people played a vital, if at times blurry, role in the life of the city. Their camps, I argue, served as significant counterbalances to the highly ordered, regimented life the people of Zlín were expected to lead. They provided frequent visual reminders that an entire way of life outside the Bat'a operating system was only a stone's throw away. We know of several instances, for example, where Czech men (I found nothing concerning Czech women) visited the camps to have fun.[308] In addition, Roma were frequently employed on labor crews working on the numerous infrastructure projects in and around the city.[309] Unfortunately, the documents on their gainful employment are far outweighed by police reports of a community filled with gambling, begging, and drinking. While certainly these vices were a part of Roma life, we cannot assume that they were any more central than sober business transactions, hard work, and powerful artistic expressions.

While prejudice toward the Roma has a long history in Central and Eastern Europe and continues to be a major obstacle for equal rights in the region, the relationship between Roma and the Batovci has yet to be discussed in the historiography of the region. Indeed, in regional histories of Zlín, both from then and now, the Roma are

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[307] Of the hundreds of personnel cards gone through for the dissertation research, not one of them was of Roma descent, and the company's nationality breakdown of 1938 makes no mention of them either. Osobni odděleni, statistiky. MZA-ZLÍN.

[308] Geza Štujlater, trestní spisy. AMZ K581 č.1118.

[309] Mention of the Roma laborers can be found both in various police records as well as in company documents found MZA-ZLIN K. 121 č.121.

entirely left out.[310] The silence of history suggests that the Roma in Zlín had no place in the narrative of modernization.

Likewise, the stories of the thousands of unemployed vagrants and beggars that moved into and through the city have yet to be told. In fact, cases of begging and vagrancy made up sixty percent of the total number of arrests made by city police from 1923 to 1938.[311] Many of them were men like Jaroslav Bubík, who came from poor areas around Zlín in hopes for some type of employment. Bubík, a former factory worker, had tattered shoes, bad teeth, but was literate. He was caught begging from house to house by a patrolman, who took him to jail and began a background check on him. It turned out, like so many others who were picked up for begging, that he had been found guilty of the offence before. He was sentenced to two nights in jail and ordered to return to his place of residence a few miles away in Paskov.[312] Indeed, the fact that vagrants were not from the city allowed authorities to see them as foreigners, whose problems were not the city's responsibility. "In 1936…all of those arrested for begging (205 in all) were foreign persons."[313]

CONCLUSION

At first glance, these stories from the policing of Zlín seem insignificant. But upon their unpacking, the policing of communists, alcoholics, prostitutes, beggars, vagrants, and "gypsies" reveal a wealth of information about who was a threat to the utopian city and what measures the authorities could go to in order to remove them.

[310] A few notable histories of Zlín that have no mention of Romani communities are Zdeněk Pokluda, *Zlín*. Paseka: Praha-Litomyšl, 2008. Karel Stloukal, *550 let města Zlína*. Zlín, 1948.
[311] Of 2,748 arrests from 1923-1937 by city police, some 1,640 were cases of vagrancy. Public health statistics, 1937. AMZ č.1123.
[312] J. Bubík, trestní spisy. AMZ K579 č. 1118.
[313] Public health statistics, 1937. AMZ č. 1123.

While we see a company town very much involved in a high modernist project, trying to engineer a rationalized society, we also see the significant spaces left between law and order. For, as has been shown, life in the company town was not always under the gaze of the company, nor was it free from everyday sin. Still, one wonders what would life have been like for the people of Zlín had there been no way around the Bat'a system, if all of Czechoslovakia had embraced the high modernist mentalité of the company. For, if policing the kingdom of shoes was continually frustrated by the spaces between company control and the rest of Czechoslovak society, surely the removal of those spaces would have resulted in an even more tightly monitored society. And that seems to be what followed when Bat'a principles moved into governmental principles after the Munich Agreement of 1938, when key personnel of the company became key personnel of the state.

This chapter outlined the development of a "modern" disciplinary system in the company town of Zlín, Czechoslovakia during the interwar period. It does so by analyzing the reports of policemen and the Bat'a Company's personal inspectors, while following the steady implementation of devices of control, from time cards to mandatory radios. It argues that the Bat'a Company developed a system highly capable of dealing with dissent through marginalization, expulsion and non-violent intimidation. Indeed, instances of state violence became increasingly rare even as the town and company grew dramatically in the interwar years. This was largely due to the creation of a society of informants, where reading the wrong literature or frequenting the wrong pub could lead to denunciation and the loss of one's job, house, or social stature, in a town controlled by the company. In addition, the wage system pioneered by Bat'a created a society of self-regulation; where conformity literally paid dividends. Yet, the drive to rationalize behavior in an industrial town reveals a project fraught with conflict as camps of

unemployed radicals on the outskirts of town, Roma caravans, stubborn villagers, legions of beggars and vagrants, prostitutes, and drunks all shadowed the attempt to make the *new industrial man*. Thus, this chapter also offers insight into the ways in which Bat'a's attempt at social engineering failed even in a relatively compact space, for the "criminals" of Zlín, left out of the largely hagiographic historiography of the Bat'a project, provide striking evidence of the limits of rationalization and the perseverance of diversity in a society of control.

Chapter 6: Bat'a, Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism, 1923-1940

"In the past people fought over religion. In the present people fight over nationalism. The future belongs to those who fight for the economy. Victory will belong to those whose work best serves the people. We must learn to work well—to serve well--and we will be victorious." Dominik Čipera[314]

Fig. 6.1 The Bat'a Factory in Chełmek, Poland 1937.

On February 17, 1935, the Bat'a Company's Polish language magazine, *Echa Chełmku (The Chelmek Echo)* ran an article that suggested that the Czech managers and their families of the Bat'a satellite town of Chełmek were fast becoming Poles. The article stated that in three years the children of the managers who had arrived from Zlín would

[314]Dominik Čipera. *Zlín*, May 1, 1933, pg3.

no longer know their mother tongue. Upbeat in tone, the article was intended to pacify a Polish audience shaken by their country's economic collapse and wary of foreigners running industries. Chełmek, founded in 1931, was part of Bat'a's larger initiative to expand manufacturing abroad in the face of the sharp tariff increases that nearly every industrial country in the world began implementing in 1929. Bat'a's response to the tariff crises was to start factory towns across the globe. Since the company often met serious local opposition with their new factory towns, Bat'a was keenly aware of the importance of putting a local face on what was widely viewed as a Czechoslovak brand. The *Echo's* prognosis of the seamless Policization of company management was a part of this project to quell local fears that Czechoslovaks were taking over what should be *their* jobs. For the Batapeople, those supposedly newly formed industrial men, such local concerns had no place in the rationalized future. Yet the locals needed to be placated so that business could move along as smoothly as possible. Hence the magazine article on managers' assimilation into Poles. However, the company's attempt at smoothing the transition of its managers from one national milieu to another had the unintended consequence of inciting the Czechoslovak consul in Krakow, and subsequently the entire Czechoslovak Foreign Service. It seemed that everywhere the company went it had to negotiate its supra-national agenda with nationalists abroad as well as at home.

Almost as soon as the article was published an official in the consulate in Krakow wrote to the embassy in Warsaw that "if the children of Czechoslovak couples in Chełmek are forgetting their mother tongue in three years than this is a poor testament to not only the parent's national pride, but of the pride of the company, which helps in founding the union Towartzystwa Skoly Ludovej (The Society of People's Schools), but

doesn't lift a finger to protest the de-nationalizing of Czechoslovak children."[315] (That the Society of Peoples' Schools was in fact a nationalist organization founded by an aristocrat was irrelevant.) Playing on the fears of Czech nationalists, many of whom were already deeply suspicious of Bat'a, the consul used the article as evidence of what to nationalists amounted to treason: the erosion of Czech national identity. The consul's attack on Bat'a found favor with the Czechoslovak ambassador in Warsaw, Václav Girsa, who then alerted the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Prague, Eduard Beneš.[316] Beneš, who would later become president, seemed to agree that the Bat'a project in Poland posed a threat to national pride, and his office took action against the company's dealings with foreigners.

Some five months after the article, Czechoslovakia's Ministry of Industry refused Bat'a's request to train an unspecified number of young employees from outside of Czechoslovakia at the Bat'a School of Work in Zlín. Though the practice of sending foreign workers to Zlín for training had become commonplace by 1935, it was now seen as a way to de-nationalize a brand name that Czech nationalists increasingly saw as "ours".[317] The rejection letter specifically mentioned the "troubling events in Poland."[318] Through a series of legal and diplomatic maneuvers the company was able to lift the ban on work and study visas for its promising foreign employees, but the message had been sent. Bat'a's rapid expansion abroad could be frustrated by nationalists afraid that the outstanding Czechoslovak shoe company would lose its "Czech" managers, and the brand name would no longer be associated with the nation.

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[315]Ministerstvo průmyslu, obchodu a živností (hereafter MPOŽ) 1918-42. k. 967 č. 86576. NA.
[316]Janusz Gruchała, Czeskie środowiska polityczne wobec spraw polskich 1920-1938, (Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice) 2002.
[317]Letter to the Ministry of Social Affairs from the Ministry of Industry, September, 14, 1935. MPOŽ, k. 967 č. 80445, NA.
[318] Ibid.

Yet, ironically, the nationalists' concern over losing *their* Bat'a was a relatively recent phenomenon. For Bat'a had previously been a source of intense uncertainty over the future for Czech and Slovak nationalists, as they debated the company's rationalization of industry and questioned the national effects of its wild success. Within Zlín, moreover, Bat'a ideologues viewed nationalism with suspicion, as they sought to inculcate a transnational identity in its employees. As company executive and mayor of Zlín Dominik Čipera's quote at the beginning of this section suggests, many of the Batamen and women saw corporate competition replacing the national competitions of the present. They therefore strove to create a strikingly nation-free experience in their stores, factories, and towns.

Yet while people's experiences working, shopping, and living in Bat'a's domains, which covered some 4000 retail outlets, 24 satellite towns, and the large industrial-social complex of Zlín, were relatively nation-free, they were at all times embedded in an encompassing nationalist rhetoric which told people that daily choices were extensions of national identity. Where people worked and shopped were seen as signs of national affiliations by a broad swath of the Czechoslovak public. As with the incident in Chełmek, Bat'a's high modernist project, rhetorically above nationality and politics, was compromised by nationalists from within and without. Living the cosmopolitan creed of a Bataman, then, was difficult. Shopping and selling under Bat'a's cosmopolitan retail philosophy was also eventually undermined. As will be shown, the downfall of the Republic and the subsequent Nazi invasion dramatically undid the internationalism of the company. However, the inculcated internationalism of the top company men, even though most of them were Czech speakers with Czech names, allowed them to adapt remarkably quickly to the company's move overseas. It also helped to facilitate a no less

remarkable transition to Nazi authority by those who chose to stay in Zlín, namely Hugo Vavréčka and Dominík Čipera.

By exploring moments of conflict and cooperation between Bat'a internationalism and Czech nationalism what follows asks what freedom people in the Bat'a milieu had in their national and international identifications. I argue that the ability to walk into a Bat'a store and know that a customer centered, first come first served policy would apply regardless of nationality, religion, or class, was a profound break with the past and that Zlín offered a unique space within Czechoslovak society for people to hold company above nation. This company identity was emboldened by a steady stream of visitors and students from abroad, a focus on workplace solidarity, and a championing of foreign systems, specifically American. And while ideas and peoples came into Zlín, they were also coming from it, which created a uniquely well-traveled populace.

This internationalism created moments of tension between Batamen and nationalists, particularly over rationalization, however, by the mid-1930s, Czechoslovak society had largely embraced Bat'a as an outstanding example of Czechoslovak ingenuity and success. For many outside of the company, Bat'a came to be a major symbol of Czechoslovak and Czech national pride.[319] The company propagated the idea that Bat'a was a "shoemaker to the world," while nationalists promoted it as a Czechoslovak or Czech success story. Still, for those who lived it, the Bat'a Company offered an arresting alternative to the narrow identifications of nationalists, enabling men and women to travel, shop, and live as cosmopolitans, as Batapeople.

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[319] In the language of interwar Czechoslovakia many Czechs used Czechoslovak and Czech interchangeably to refer to their identity. Others preferred to Czech and never warmed to the new name. See Carol Skalnik Leff. *National Conflict in Czechoslovakia: The Making and Remaking of a State, 1918-1987*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

The lands of Bohemia and Moravia have been a remarkable source for historians and theorists of nationalism. From foundational thinkers like Ernest Gellner, who grew up in Prague, to the spate of recent historians of East-Central Europe, like Jeremy King, Tara Zahra, and Chad Bryant, scholars have routinely looked to the region to try to answer questions about the nature of national identity and nationalism.[320] And while their insights have uncovered complex, often contradictory moments, recent historical narratives have followed a strikingly similar pattern. Their collective meta-narrative seems to be one of antagonistic nationalists fanning out into towns and countryside to propagate an identity to a largely apathetic populace. The narrative holds that the nationalists' organizational skills combined with their elevated place in society, as they were largely teachers, university students, civil servants, and other members of the middle class, gave them a disproportionate voice in political and social affairs, as well as control over public memory. They were therefore able to dominate the discussion of identification and marginalize those who rejected national identification. Recent historical work has placed nationalists as the primary antagonists in the story of how Bohemia moved from a multicultural Habsburg mélange to an increasingly intolerant Czechlands. In their words, during the first half of the 20th century in the lands of Bohemia and Moravia, nationalists "kidnapped" children's souls, pressured nobles to turn against their own class interests, and aggressively hounded so-called amphibians (labeled so because they could move from German to Czech nationalities).[321] Their work has

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320 Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983. Bryant, Chad Carl. *Prague in Black: Nazi rule and Czech Nationalism*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007. Zahra, Tara. *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008. King, Jeremy. *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2002.

321 Tara Zahra. *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands,* 1900-1948. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008. Eagle Glassheim *Noble Nationalists: the*

deconstructed the historiography of nationalists, with its insistence on the ancient origins of national identity, and revealed the ad-hoc, contested, and modern nature of national identification. It has also roundly condemned the work, thoughts, and actions of the nationalists of the interwar period who are shown to be the force behind much if not all of the horrible fate which awaited Czechoslovakia's minorities during and after World War II. Taken collectively, recent historiography suggests that nationalism dominated everyday life in interwar Czechoslovakia, and almost everyone had to decide how to act nationally.

Internationalism and cosmopolitanism, however, have been largely ignored among historians of East-Central and Eastern Europe. For western historians especially, internationalism appears not to have been a valid option in the lives of those who experienced the late Habsburg and interwar years. Instead, individuals who advocated a citizen-of-the-world mentality appear on the fringes of a narrative of national conflict. With a few exceptions, such as the work of those focused on the cosmopolitan crowd of artists that gathered in Prague's Café Arco, cosmopolitanism in interwar Czechoslovakia appears as a weak form of identification that motivated few and affected fewer.[322] And yet, despite the pervasive influence of nationalists of all stripes, cosmopolitanism thrived in the period. Scholars of the Jewish experience in Czechoslovakia frequently remark on the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the Jewish community in the interwar period when a Jew could choose between three nationality options on the census and justify each choice through his/her daily life.[323] Czechoslovakia itself was an international experiment, as it

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Transformation of the Bohemian Aristocracy. Cambridge: Harvard, 2005. Chad Bryant. *Prague in black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007.

322 Scott Spector's work on the Prague circle makes the claim that the group existed "between identities." *Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Kafka's fin-de-siecle*. Berkeley: U. of California. 2002.

323 Hillel Kieval, *The Languages of Community: The Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands*. Berkeley: U. of California. 2000. Gary Cohen's work has shown a marked cosmopolitanism in Prague's Jewish

attempted to fuse Czechs and Slovaks while holding together an ethnically and geographically diverse country. In the subject at hand, Bat'a presents perhaps the most compelling story of cosmopolitanism in the interwar period, as the company strove to mold the new industrial man into a supra-national being.

Scholars of the Bat'a phenomenon have recently begun to incorporate this cosmopolitanism into their discourse. A 2011 conference on the company, "Company Towns of the Bat'a Concern", brought together scholars from Europe and North America to investigate the global impact of the Bat'a Company in the interwar period.[324] What came from the conference was nuanced picture of how the company tried to export its ideal industrial city throughout the world. The results, while varied, suggest that Bataism transcended nationality as it replicated Zlín in Europe, North America, and India. It did so by placing its workers into its unique welfare-capitalist system that held commerce above national pride. The conference also highlighted how this transnational corporate project was met with a transnational protest movement. Bat'a's rapid expansion, its system, and even its style galvanized unions and traditionalists to organize a pan-European anti-Bat'a movement.[325] North American shoe manufacturers and labor unions also actively sought to ban Bat'a from their markets. Bat'a infuriated traditionalists and nationalists by unleashing cheap, well-made shoes on local markets and loosening national identifications. Its refusal to negotiate with labor unions, its Czechoslovak management, and its method of manufacturing all put it at odds with local groups.

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community. See, *The politics of ethnic survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981.

[324] International Conference "Company Towns of the Bat'a Concern", 24–25 March 2011Prague, Academic Conference Centre.

[325] Anne Sudrow's "Fighting 'Slavic Expansionism' in Western Europe: A Transnational European Movement against the Bata Company during the Interwar Years" provides a fascinating account of the opposition in Western Europe to the company. My work "Imagining Bat'a in the World of Tomorrow" provides insight into the American opposition to the company at the beginning of WWII.

Meanwhile, its cheap, quality shoes and the shopping experience it offered at retail stores, where the "customer was king", appealed to consumers across national boundaries.

While the first steps have been made to connect the various company towns of the Bat'a concern with the project of Bataism, there remains a significant gap in our understanding of how Bat'a cosmopolitanism influenced and countered the intense nationalism of interwar Czechoslovakia. Bataism suggests that trans-national perspectives had a much larger role in public life in the Republic than previously considered, though certainly not reaching the level of influence on daily thought and behavior as did national ones. By following the waxing and waning of Bat'a cosmopolitanism we can see how it impacted the people of Czechoslovakia in profound ways, which might lead us to rethink historians' meta-narrative of nationalists acting on a passive, apathetic populace and begin asking how internationalism acted as an alternative perspective.

A Complicated Cosmopolitanism

Carefully cultivated to represent a modern aesthetic, the Bat'a name was not intended to represent the nation. Indeed, while nationalist rhetoric coursed throughout interwar Czechoslovakia, the company actively sought to prevent it from becoming a rationale for employee behavior. In particular, managers and salespeople were expected to be explicitly multi-national, interchangeable parts of a global empire. When assessing an employee managers were to use company loyalty, appearance, and work-ethic as the only metrics of evaluation. Since sales and purchasing managers were required to be able to seduce customers from any nation, in a variety of languages, and with the mantra that the "customer is our lord," they were expected to be above national rivalries, ready to be

sent anywhere in the world to manage local populations, with whom they were often unfamiliar. In essence, they were to be uniform pieces of an ever-expanding empire who could be moved and replaced with little complication.

Of course, this multi-national mission often conflicted with the managers and salesmen themselves, the customers, and state governments. Repeatedly, instances of national chauvinism affected the manager's work and rarely did government officials view the Batamen as anything other than Czech. As we shall see, nationalists swung from embracing Bat'a as a glorious symbol of Czech progress, to seeking to censure it; outlawing Bat'a practices, such as shoe repair departments within its retail stores, and pressuring the company to scale back its expansion abroad. The company's aggressive commitment to a modernist architectural style also inflamed nationalists who successfully blocked several planned department stores.

The Batamen were often conflicted between the cosmopolitan attitudes of the company and the nationalism of their present, especially during the late 1930s. For, while the worldwide expansion of the Bat'a concern challenged nationalists on several fronts by demanding a culture of respect for customers of all nationalities, moving across national boundaries with factory towns that ascribed to a modernist aesthetic rather than any national architectural style, and inculcating its workforce with an cosmopolitan perspective, Bat'a could not escape nationalism. Its promised cosmopolitanism, while leading to real changes in the ways in which employees acted and identified themselves, was routinely checked by nationalist fears and concepts to which managers occasionally succumbed. As will be discussed, not all nations were equal in the eyes of the company and political change affected the company’s cosmopolitanism. Some of these changes were out of its control, for example, its promise of a nation-free shopping experience ended with the implementation of the Nazi race laws in 1938. Other moments of acting

nationally, though, while instigated by outside events, were entirely Bat'a led directives, such as ascertaining every employee's nationality for the first time in 1937. In the end, the story of Bat'a's cosmopolitanism very much confirms what several theorists of identification have proposed; that in times of intense uncertainty people act nationally.[326]

IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

In the first decades of the 20th century, when the Bat'a shoe factory was one of several small to middle sized operations in the area, founder Tomas Bat'a experimented with socialism, which proved, from his point at least, to be an abysmal failure. After inviting in a representative of the Social Democratic Party who began organizing workers to form their own union, Bat'a was quickly confronted by a demand for higher wages, fewer working hours, and workers drinking beer while on the job. When Tomas tried to fire the offending workers, they went on strike. The experience turned him away from his early hero, Leo Tolstoy, and left him looking elsewhere for inspiration.[327] H turned away from unions entirely, and found his new hero in Henry Ford, a committed anti-unionist. Tomas' looked to American work practices at least as early as 1905 when he made the decision to travel to the United States to work and learn in American industry.[328] He returned with the zeal of the newly converted, espousing not only American labor practices but American attitudes. He viewed the United States as a place where everyman could improve his status in society through hard work. Among other things, he was struck by the American worker's disinterest in nationality and religion. After Tomas looked

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[326] Rogers Brubaker and Eric Hobsbawm are the most outstanding voices for the ways in which national identity can change very quickly and in intensity during times of crises. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, pg 10-11. Brubaker, *Nationalism Re-framed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge Press. 2004.

[327] Milan Zelený, *Cesty k úspechu: Trvalé hodnoty soustavy Baťa*, (Kusak: Vyškov) 2005. Pg. 131.

[328] Anthony Cekota, *Entrepreneur Extraordinary: Tomas Bat'a* (Ontario: T.H. Mills). 1968.

abroad for inspiration as to how best to run his factory, he felt like he had found the model that would transform his business in Moravia by changing his workforce's attitude.

Born in the national mélange of the Habsburg Empire in a place closer to Vienna than Prague, Tomas' was used to using multiple languages and dialects to do business. One of his first major successes came during WWI when he won a contract by appealing to the authorities in Vienna to make army boots. By the end of the war, he was using several hundred Russian POWs to do so. More importantly, though, the administrative chaos of Vienna after 1916 left Tomas the responsibility of providing food and clothing for his workforce as well as securing supply lines for his factory. Factory work also gave his local employees an exemption from military service.[329] His company saved hundreds of his neighbors. This WWI experience showed Tomas to be a man capable of using foreign workers, adapting to the international situation for company gain.

His infatuation and careful study of Henry Ford did even more than his WWI experience to cultivate international ideals. The ability of the Ford Company to create remarkably productive workers out of a largely immigrant labor pool, impressed upon Tomas that nationality had nothing to do with productivity. He therefore had no nationality requirements to applicants, nor did he hesitate to open factories abroad when the situation called for it. Unlike Ford, though, Tomas sought to associate his brand with internationalism, as Bat'a did not import Ford's immigrant policies.

[329] Ibid, pg.118-131.

Figure 6.2. Representatives of the different national groups at the Bat'a School of Work march on May Day.

One of the key differences between the Ford model and the Bat'a model was in their attitudes toward assimilation. For while Ford created the famous "melting pot" ceremony, which had foreign workers graduating from Ford's English School descend into a pot in their national costume to emerge dressed as Americans holding American flags, Bat'a had foreign workers and students hold their national flags high at public events throughout their time in Zlín.[330] The 290 foreign Young Men in the company's

[330] Meyer, Stephen. 1981. *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908-1921*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Bat'a School of Work in 1937, for example, lived in national groups, sleeping, and going to school next to their fellow compatriots.[331]

Thus, there was no industrial Czechoslovakization in Zlín. Instead foreigners were not to be assimilated to a national identity but to a corporate one, which actively sought to promote a universalism rooted in its own high modernist ethos. They were not to become Czech or German or any other nationality, but Batamen and women, which meant being able to adapt to new cultures around the world on one hand, and uphold a company aesthetic on the other. Perhaps the most obvious example of the company's desire to have its workers place the company above the nation was the routine use of the term "Bat'ovci" or Batapeople when referring to employees. First used in the 1923 municipal elections as the name of the company's candidates, Bataman came to largely replace Czechoslovak or Czech in the company controlled press to refer to its workforce.[332] It became a term of identification that served to further the exceptionalism of the company.

Top ranking Batamen furthered the cosmopolitan mission of their leader. Dominik Čipera and Antony Cekota, a corporate executive and the leader of the advertising department respectively, consistently advocated internationalism and tried to inculcate it in the workforce and promote it in Czechoslovak society. From as early as 1928, Cekota declared the success of the internationalism of the company town, "Here in this rather provincial town are people who are worldlier than citizens of the largest cities. English is heard on the streets as well as German. There isn't a European language that isn't heard here. The words, business contracts, tariffs, balance sheets, courses, import,

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331 Bat'a Škola Práce. List of Foreign Ml. Muži MZA-ZLÍN K.1350 č.4

332 Cekota, Antonín, and Tomáš Baťa. *Jak rostl Zlín: naše volby r. 1923-1927*. Zlín: Nákladem "Knihovny Baťovy služby veřejnosti", 1931.

export, etc. are not only theoretical but a part of daily life. The cosmopolitanism of the people of Zlín is the direct result of not having political corruption and bad blood."[333] By bad blood Cekota was referring to nationalist conflict that plagued other regions in the country.

Like Cekota, Čipera felt that the underlying purpose for the company was to serve mankind. Nationality should not get in the way of service, he argued. In order to put this cosmopolitan philosophy into their workforce, executives selected training materials that reflected a supra-national identity. Manager's required reading was profoundly international in outlook. Richard Coudenhove-Calergi, certainly the most well-known pan-European of the time, was routinely on the list, as was Alexis Carrel, an advocate of eugenics who promoted a European identity.[334]

These transnational thinkers were directly related to the overall goal of the Bat'a Company to shoe the world. To take on such a global task, the thousands of employees sent abroad needed to be able to place aside any national chauvinism and conform to the identity of a company person. The numbers relay a common experience of international travel: of one hundred and eleven managers whose biographies were published in the company newspaper from 1936 to 1939, seventy three spent some time working and living abroad.[335] As figure 5.3 suggests, though away in the world, the employee remained beholden to a modern aesthetic. From thatched roofs to sumptuous department stores, the Bataman needed to look the same. This speaks to the high-modernist internationalism of the company, as it required similarity in various contexts in order for

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[333] A. Cekota. 1928. Found in Milan Zelený, *Cesty k úspechu: Trvalé hodnoty soustavy Baťa*, (Kusak: Vyškov) 2005. pg 130.
[334] *Výběr a výchova průmyslového člověka* Tisk-Zlín 1937 MZA-Zlín k.1012 č.17. Also Kalergi is in *Vedení osobního oddělení*. Tisk-Bat'a, 1938. MZA-ZLÍN k.1010 č.12. Both books were required reading for managers.
[335] *Zlín,* 1936-39.

its dream of interchangeability to be achieved. Thus, the transnational Bataman was supposed to look beyond national difference in order to standardize the experience of modernity. In other words, the Bat'a way of being in the world was not supposed to change, rather, the world would change to it. Of course, as the following three examples illustrate, the world did not change fast enough, rather, the Batapeople seem to have changed to an increasingly intolerant world.

Figure 6.3 The Bataman abroad in Brazil.[336]

[336] Fotoarchive. MZA-ZLÍN K. 22 č.926.

BAT'A AND INDIA

Though the nations of Europe and North America were equal in the eyes of Bat'a, Tomas initially held that two races existed in the world with a marked difference in ability. For all of the man's cosmopolitanism, he was not able to move outside of the racist mentalities of his day. Some of Tomas' clearest statements on the question of race can be found in the company newspaper around the time of his celebrated trips to India in 1925 and his trip around the world in 1931.When visiting India, Bat'a wrote "the world is divided into two parts. The lands that have a regular cold rains and the lands that are in the eternal sunshine where life does not require a lot of material… Through his battle with nature the man of the North had to learn complex tasks and become more of a man than his brother in the south…The northern man produces for the sun-drenched man what he cannot himself, chiefly science, organized government and industrial goods…When you are in these lands you find that the northern man is pumping the life blood into the a new era. It feels like the differences among the various nationalities become meaningless and the northern to the northerner, to the white, looks like the same race…Luckily there is no danger that this man (the southern man) can win over the European as long as he cannot win over himself and his ignorance. A nation has a right to sovereignty only as long as it can manage its land in such a way to best benefit humanity in general."[337]

Some six years later, Bat'a's racial attitudes seem to have shifted to a more embracing perspective. Perhaps the first ever globe traversing trip in an airplane by the head of a major company, in 1931-32 Bat'a traveled throughout Italy, North Africa, the Middle East, India, Southeast Asia, North America, which he reached by boat, and finally back to Zlín.[338] Tomas' experience with flying left a deep impression. "Aviation brings

[337] Tomas Bat'a "Dvě rasy." *Sdělení*. May 30, 1925.
[338] It was thought of as the first such trip by the Bat'a people, at least.

home to man the necessity to serve others. It teaches him that his life is continuously in the hands of other people. It cures man of hate towards other nations."[339] It was no coincidence that during this same period, Bat'a began opening the doors of its management training program to foreign students while it aggressively expanded around the globe.

In 1931, the Bat'a School of Work (BSP) began accepting its first groups of non-white students, a group of Egyptians and Indians who caused considerable curiosity in Zlín. They were reported to have begun "learning Czech on the boat ride over to Zlín."[340] Some of these students stayed in Zlín through World War II, marrying Czechs and assimilating into the town. Most though, returned to India to become managers and engineers at Bat'a's burgeoning company town of Batanagar.[341] Unfortunately, we have very little record as to what these young men thought and experienced while in Zlín.

The Bat'a attitude toward race changed over the interwar period, but its attitude toward colonialism seems to have moved more slowly. As late as 1937 company reports from the large factory in the company town of Batanagar, India assured executives that the "dangerous radical Ghandi" had no ill-effects on exports and production in India. After Jan Bat'a traveled to India in 1937 on a similar round-the-world trip he reported to the people of Zlin that "the truth is, the main source of the poverty of the Indian can be found in his religion."[342] Still, Jan found the Indians to be "beautiful people, clean, tall, intelligent, and with high goals…The shoemaker entrepreneur is free here like nowhere else in Europe."[343] With Jan Bat'a moving away from the white man's burden rhetoric of

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339 Cekota, quoting T. Bat'a, pg 357.
340 "Indičtí mladí muži ve Zlíně" Zlín. May 15, 1933
341 List of Foreign Young Men, MZA-ZLÍN K. 1350 č.4.
342 Jan Bat'a "Indie, jak ji vidím." *Zlín*. February 22, 1937, pg. 3.
343 Jan Bat'a. "Poznamky z Indie." *Zlin*. March 1, 1937.

his deceased half-brother, and the company increasing their presence on the subcontinent, Batamen increasingly softened on the idea of Indian sovereignty. In 1938, Indira Ghandi and Jawaharlal Nehru visited Zlín on their travels across Europe. Their visit was sparked by Bat'a's operations in the subcontinent. Both were treated as honored guests, with personal meetings with top executives and private tours given of the factory complex.[344]

Bat'a's relationship with India was indicative of other relationships around the world in that the politics of the country were of concern only as far as they affected production. While both chief executives ventured racial theories and applied broad stereotypes to the subcontinent, they aggressively sought the wide-open Indian shoe market. Furthermore, seeing the imminence of Indian independence, the company courted India's future leaders. Politics, race, and nation mattered very little as long as profits kept coming in. One could argue that even the racial and national stereotypes of the executives were washed out by the apolitical, rational, Bat'a system. As a result, Bata's company town Batanagar became the largest industrial concern in India during WWII and remained so into the 1960s. To this day it is rare to meet an Indian unfamiliar with the brand-name.[345]

BAT'A AND THE GERMANS

The national rivalry between self-identifying Germans and Czechs was far more pressing in the day to day concerns of the company than any other national conflict. Bat'a actively courted German speaking customers and eventually dominated the German shoe market. And, like in other places around the world, this domination caused considerable

[344] Návštěvý v podníku. MZA-ZLÍN. K.12 č. 505.
[345] For more on Bat'a and India see Sreeparna Bagchi, "The Zlin Enterprise: A Profile of the Role of the First Multinational Organization in the Leather Industry in Bengal (1931-1945)." *The Calcutta Historical Journal* 25, 2005 pg 47-63.

protestation by German nationalists who saw the company as a Slavic concern that threatened German craftsmen. Still, the company's promotion of a cosmopolitan pluralism meant that Germans within Czechoslovakia at least, and especially within Zlín, encountered little unpleasantness when working, shopping, and living in Bat'a owned space. Policy dictated that the company's overwhelmingly Czech-speaking workforce be reprimanded for exhibits of national chauvinism, but such reprimands were rarely given as few incidents went reported. The lack of evidence of national conflict does not seem to be the result of a lack of will to report such incidents, rather, as outlined in this dissertation's chapter on crime and punishment, the Bat'a system's comprehensive surveillance was designed to alert authorities to the slightest possible disturbances to production. Therefore, it can be safely argued that nationalist conflict in Zlín was exceptionally rare up until the Nazi occupation. Then, nationalist acts increasingly became a part of the fabric of everyday life, even in the preeminent company town of Zlín.

Despite the company's courtship of Germans, Germany never gained the privileged status of the United States, England, or Italy in the eyes of company executives. For while these other models of manufacturing, work ethic, and innovation were routinely admired through public statements, German ideas and innovations were largely absent from executives' plans and speeches. There was never a recorded explanation as to what accounted for this absence. But this absence is curious given that historians have argued that the only company in Europe that rivaled Bat'a's attempt to create a new type of industrial person and work was Siemens in Siemensstadt.[346] Still, while Germany may not have ever obtained the favored status of The United States,

[346] Ondřej Ševeček. *Zrození Baťovy průmyslové metropole: Továrna, městský prostor a společnost ve Zlíně v letech 1900-1938* (Veduta: České Budějovice) 2009 pg 45.

England, Italy, or even Belgium, the company spent considerable resources courting the German consumer and conquering the German market.

By 1930 the Bat'a Company surpassed the entire German shoe industry in yearly output.[347] They also opened a satellite town in Ottmuth that same year, in what was then Upper Silesia. Bat'a shoes flooded into the German market. In turn, German shoe manufacturers and labor unions banded together to try to fight off what was increasingly referred to in the German press as a Slavic expansion. No matter how well organized, the protests could not keep German customers from wanting the experience of shopping at Bat'a or its cheap well-made shoes. The Nazi regime did what the labor unions and shoe manufacturers could not. Within three months of assuming power, the Nazis began enacting legislation to ban Bat'a from Germany. From then on, the German government enacted a series of legislation designed to remove the stores and the factory from Bat'a control.[348]

Even within Czechoslovakia, courting the German customer could be difficult. Particularly in the 1920s, before the company's advertising department became staffed with native speakers, German nationalists sent in complaints about awkwardly worded advertising in the German language. "In a land where two tribes live side by side, Bat'a has to have more respect for the linguistic sensitivities of the other tribe."[349] These missteps, though, seemed to have done little to prevent the company from moving into German language majority areas in Czechoslovakia and doing profitable business with

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[347] Ibid. Pg. 70.
[348] Martin Jemelka, "Ottmuth: A German Enclave of Batism?" in *Company Towns of the Baťa Concern*, 24–25 March 2011Prague, Academic Conference Centre.
[349] MZA-ZLÍN K.8 č. 115.

German speakers.[350] For regardless of the growing affection many Sudeten Germans had for the Nazi regime, they kept shopping at Bat'a in the 1930s.

Germans also came to Zlín in the interwar period as students, on trade missions, as tourists, and as employees. Throughout the 1930s, people from Germany made up the second largest group of visitors to Zlín after those from Austria.[351] The Bat'a School of Work also averaged an enrollment of 35 Germans and 3 Austrians as students from 1934-38.[352] The daily presence of German speakers did not create instances of conflict in the town. According to police records, in fact, nationalist incidents were rare.

In some cases, the company's policy of efficiency over politics left members of the Sudeten Deutschland Party in Bat'a's employ even during the tumult of the late 1930s. SdP sympathizer Emil Seidel, for example, was left alone at his position in sales because the social inspector felt that he could do little harm as a salesman in the Sudeten area, in fact, his political loyalties were seen as being helpful for the store's reputation in the area.[353] Despite such political flexibility, the company could not survive in the area after the Munich Agreement of late September, 1938, which annexed the area to Nazi Germany. In November, 1938 Bat'a sent orders to close all stores in the annexed areas and began the complicated task of moving personnel into the newly formed Second Republic of Czecho-Slovakia.[354] In addition, Bat'a fired 504 employees considered German between September 27 and 29, 1938.[355] Many of these employees were Germans

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350 The company continued to open stores in the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia until the fall of 1938, they had 141 in all in the area. Instrukce k protokolům pro kontrolu prodejen v územi obsazaném Německem. MZA-ZLÍN K. 1607č.385.

351 Statistický přehled o návštěvě cizinců ve Zlíně. 1930-1940. SoKA-AMZ. Č. 1041.

352 Cizinci v firmě. MZA-ZLÍN K.1350 č. 4.

353 Personnel odděleni. MZA-ZLÍN K. 1011 č. 15.

354 Instrukce k protokolům pro kontrolu prodejen v územi obsazaném Německem. MZA-ZLÍN K. 1607 č.385.

355 Propuštených němců. MZA-ZLÍN K.1350 č. 4.

in the recently annexed areas, though not all. After Munich, the company abandoned its cosmopolitan attitude, at least to Germans, and became caught up in a moment of heightened tension.

The company could fire these employees so quickly as a result of having watched the growing rise of extremism with considerable anxiety. Suspected supporters of the Nazi Party, particularly those in Zlín, were closely watched by agents of the company town and fired on confirmation of their political affiliation. Such was the case with Antoni Ervín, a clerk in Zlín who police heard say "that Hitler is the leader of the most just government in the world, and that he will soon bring about the end of the Republic of Czechoslovakia which oppresses all Germans."[356] He was quickly let go. The growing tension between Germany and Czechoslovakia led the company to account for every employee's nationality for the first time in 1937. This Bat'a census amounted to a loyalty check. Social inspectors wrote down each foreign employee's attitude toward Bat'a, and sometimes about Czechoslovakia, on the forms.[357] The survey revealed the limits of the professed cosmopolitanism of the company, and greatly facilitated the removal of Germans from the company after Munich.

With the subsequent invasion in March of 1939, though, the factories in Zlín turned their entire output toward the Third Reich. The company became the leading footwear producer for the German Army, and also contributed hundreds of thousands of tires for German army vehicles.[358] Though outside the scope of this study, the factories in Chelmek and Ottmuth came to be used by the Nazi authorities as work camps; Chelmek became an extension of Auschwitz.

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[356] Trestní spisy A. Ervín. October 5, 1938 Státní Okrésní archiv, Archiv města Zlína (SOkA-AMZ) k. 579 č.1118.
[357] Zaměstnanci dle národnosti a dle příslušnosti, 1937. Osobní odděleni. MZA-ZLÍN K. 1011 č. 15.
[358] Plan práce, 1941. MZA-ZLÍN K.11 č. 13.

Within Zlín, the Nazi occupation dramatically undid the cosmopolitan atmosphere that the company promoted. For while German could be heard even more frequently on the streets, and education came to focus more and more on German language and culture, in the movie houses, bars, and private homes of Zlín, German came to be scorned as the language of the occupier. The city in 1939, in fact, had to order police to attend every film shown after several instances of heckling when a German came on the screen.[359] In addition, anti-German graffiti, vandalism of the Oberlandrat's house, and numerous reports of anti-German outbursts in social establishments all served to create a sense of hostility to Germans.[360] Zlín's exceptionalism, where German-Czech conflict seemed a world away, was no more.

BAT'A AND THE CZECHS

If the company's national flexibility allowed it to appeal to both German and Czech consumers, its emphasis on being above nations and an avatar of modernity brought it into a protracted conflict with Czech nationalists who worried that the Bat'a's system undermined traditional Czech craftsmen, its architecture undermined Czech style, and its internationalism undermined national identity. At the same time, nationalists overtime came to champion Bat'a as proof of Czech greatness. Especially in the second half of the 1930s, Bat'a came to be a symbol of Czech solidarity, when buying Bat'a shoes and celebrating the company came to be a widely shared experience. Right wing groups began tying the company's success to the nation, allowing them a talking point about how Czech industries should be run by Czechs. Company men, particularly chief

[359] Protiněmecké – různé akce. SOkA-AMZ K. 1152
[360] Ibid.

executive Jan Bat'a also drifted toward right-wing politics during this period, becoming increasingly interested in modeling the country on the Bat'a system.

Rationalization in the 1920s became a highly contested term that crossed nationalist lines to pit hand-craftsmen against growing machine-based industries, like Bat'a. Shoemaking, with its long tradition of cottage production where workers custom made shoes often in small workshops at their residences, was particularly vulnerable to the introduction of machinery and assembly line production. So too were a variety of trades that became threatened when Bat'a retail stores began offering shoe repair, shoe shines, mineral water and soda, and began looking in-house for their storefront designs.

The Czech shoemakers of Prostějov, long a bastion of traditional shoemaking offered the first concerted resistance against the company in 1923, appealing to Czech nationalism by suggesting that the "inhuman" factory system of Bat'a was undermining a long Czech tradition of hand-made shoes. Following quickly on the heels of the Prostějov protests, a nation-wide anti-Bat'a movement linked the German Verband der Gewerbe-Genossenschaften and its fifty four chapters with some 215 Czech-oriented organizations to protest the expansion of the company into shoe repair and personal service.[361] The groups called for a total boycott of all Bat'a products and tried to pressure politicians into outlawing shoe repair in department stores. Their primary argument was that shoe repair services and hand-made shoes were crucial industries not only for employment reasons but for national ones as well. While grafting their protest onto the platform of the Tradesmen's political party, the protests were unable to enact legislation against Bat'a's shoe repair departments, at least for the time being. The next major wave of protests over Bat'a's supposed anti-nationalism happened when the company introduced restaurants in

[361] NA. MPOŽ. 1924-25 Baťa. K.1878 č. 49821

its department stores, particularly its buffet in Prague. There, a customer could have a coffee for 1Kč, which was roughly half the price other cafes in Prague charged. The result was a waiters strike against the company. Eventually, the Czechoslovak government intervened and outlawed restaurants in department stores.[362]

The most concerted attempt among self-labeled nationalists to diminish the growing dominance of the company in the shoe industry came in 1934, when the Tradesman's Party was able to fulfill its constituency's wish by outlawing shoe repair in retail stores. The company responded with a massive advertising blitz across Czechoslovakia, appealing not to national solidarity but to people's finances. "This is an attack on your pocketbooks" announced one of the more prominent company fliers.[363] The company then went on the offensive, collecting thousands of signatures across the country; within a year, the proposal was overturned.

Meanwhile, Bat'a architecture, like its rationalized industrial system, attracted widespread protest. For nationalists, Bat'a's functionalist style of architecture, which was applied to almost every Bat'a retail store, threatened an undefined national aesthetic. Interestingly, Slovaks, Czechs, and Germans were offended by the new style in equal measure. When the company came into a town and began building a new store or renovating an old building they almost always sought to have the building in the center of town, standing in stark contrast to the architectural styles around it. One of the more celebrated contests over a Bat'a building occurred in Brno from 1928-1931. There, Bat'a planners proposed building a skyscraper in the heart of old town. The design was to be remarkable, the first skyscraper in Czechoslovakia, and would have presented a striking contrast with the baroque and gothic buildings that dominate the city center. Nationalist

[362] Národní archiv (NA) Ministerstvo prumyslovu obchodu a živnostenských (MPOZ) K.1054 č.16491.
[363] Personnel oddělení. Správkáren. MZA-ZLÍN K.1559 č. 8.

groups, both Czech and German, came together to resist the construction of the building, arguing that it was an affront to the tradition of Brno.

Yet rationalization, as exemplified by Bat'a, came to be seen by many within Czechoslovakia as a good thing for the nation. In a series of articles on the company run in 1931, the most intellectually influential magazine in Czechoslovakia, *Přítomnost*, came to the conclusion that Bat'a's form of rationalization and even its expansion abroad was good for the nation. "(Because Bat'a's shoes are so affordable) Czech workers in Zlín get the wages of Bavarian farmers buying boots rather than German shoe manufacturers. Bat'a's expansion into the international market has opened a new source of wages for the Č.S.R, for national pride...those shoe makers put out of work by Bat'a pale in comparison to the 17,000 people employed by the firm."[364]

The debate over rationalization, and the Czechoslovak government's attitudes towards it, clearly swung further towards Bat'a's favor in 1936 when the Central Committee of Czechoslovak Business and Commerce released its report on the "Influence of Rationalization on the Health of the Workers."[365] Their lengthy report used Bat'a as an example as to how rationalization increased the health of the workers by providing healthcare and more opportunities to exercise. The investigators concluded, "if done correctly and justly, rationalization brings a great good to the nation."[366] Overtime, Bat'a's rationalization became widely accepted in powerful circles, and even became a prop for the fanatically nationalist Czech fascists.

When Czech fascists organized a meeting in Zlín in 1937, police agents wrote a lengthy report detailing the event that offers a fascinating insight to both the political

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364 "Anketa o Baťovy." *Přítomnost*. Feb. 11, 1931.
365 Ústředna čs. Obchodních a živostenských komor. "Influence of rationalization on the Health of the Workers." NA. MPOŽ. K.1013 č. 68810-36
366 Ibid.

atmosphere in the company town as well as how the far right began to use Bat'a for their own purposes. The meeting took place in the events hall of the Hotel Založna, where some 400 people gathered to hear three speeches by members of the National Committe of Fascists. The speeches were peppered with comments about eliminating the foreign capital of the Jews and Germans in the country and about how the country needed to flex its military muscles in the face of Nazi aggression. The keynote speaker was general Rudolf Gajdos a former legionnaire, who became one of the key leaders of the Czech fascist movement. The speakers referred directly to Jan Bat'a's recent letters from Italy, which had celebrated the fascist's accomplishments there. They also made use of the fact that the ever-growing Bat'a concern was in Czech hands, which showed that their nationalist goal of consolidating all capital within the nation was possible. While attracting a sizeable number of people, the fascists were not given a warm welcome, as several times the speakers were shouted down by members of the crowd.[367] Still, Bat'a had come a long way from the early to mid 1930s when an array of nationalist groups lined up against it. Perhaps given the instability of the late 1930s, the impressive organizational power of Bat'a was enough to convince Czech nationalists that Bat'a was theirs.

[367] Fascist activities in Zlín, 1935-1941. SOkA-AMZ č.1125

THE LATE 1930S AND COSMOPOLITANISM

No matter how international Bat'a rhetoric and appearances became, the Bat'a manager could not avoid becoming embroiled in nationalism, particularly after 1936, when the tense political situation in Central Europe brought national divisions to the forefront of company concerns. In 1937, for the first time executives requested that all managers report the nationality of their employees. Their responses were at times accompanied by a short description of the loyalty of non-Czech employees, which provide insights into the increasing relevance of nationalist discourse on managers in the field. Using these accounts, the company categorized their workforce according to nationality for the first time. The tallies show a company whose workforce in Zlín was overwhelmingly Czech, some 92%, but with a significant amount of Germans, Slovaks, and Ruthenians (Rusyns) working in retail stores throughout Czechoslovakia.[368] Of course, each factory abroad was filled with that countries' predominate nationality, with a handful of Czechoslovaks (the company did not differentiate here between Slovaks and Czechs) in leadership positions. At home and abroad, Czechoslovaks dominated management. For example, out of the leaders of every accounting department only three out of 89 were not Czechoslovak.[369] Indeed, in spite of the internationalist rhetoric and outlook of the Batamen, the upper echelons of the company remained through World War Two, to be "an essentially Czechoslovakian team."[370]

And yet the company rejected nationalist demands to put the nation before profits, particularly when the company came under fire for opening factories abroad after the Great Depression. Antony Cekota, for one, remained a consistent voice for the Bat'a cosmopolitan creed even in the middle of the nationalist fervor that began in 1937. In a

368 Osobní Odděleni, MZA-ZLÍN K. 1011 č. 15.
369 Osobní oddělení. MZA-ZLÍN K.1011 č. 5.
370 Thomas J. Bata, Shoemaker to the World (Stoddard: Toronto) 1990. pg 100.

speech given to top management in October, 1937, Cekota ordered his press corps to continue to appeal to citizens of the world. "Do not support chauvinism and do not give it any space in the newspapers. Our work serves all of the people of the world and cooperates with all nations. Give space to that which brings people together and connects people as people."[371] Cosmopolitan in thought, but largely Czech in ethnic makeup, company men after Munich had a much more difficult time remaining citizens of the world.

In a surprising about-face, the rhetoric of national chauvinism began to emanate from Jan Bat'a after the establishment of the Second Republic of Czecho-Slovakia. Just as the state began to implement programs long championed by the Batamen, such as work camps for the unemployed, massive infrastructure improvement projects, and widespread school reform, the Batamen under the leadership of Jan came to see themselves as guardians of the nation. "The 10,000 Batamen throughout the world have to guard our nation so that it can be respected and taken into account by all."[372] For the first time in public, the chief executive began to favor the "Czecho-Slovak" nation at the expense of other minority groups within the country.

Nowhere was this shift in attitude more apparent than in a series of editorials Jan wrote for the town's newspaper about what should be done with the hundreds and thousands of people fleeing into the rump state of Czecho-Slovakia in an attempt to escape the expanding Nazi state. Bat'a's response to the wave of political emigrants made the argument that the state should help the "runaways" by finding them other countries to live in. "There are other states where there are barely 10 people per square kilometer, meanwhile the western part of our state is around 150 people per square kilometer…We

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[371] Osobní odděleni. A. Cekota. Instrukce osob. Oddělení. MZA-ZLÍN K. 1506 č. 2
[372] J. Bat'a "Soucit a pomoc." *Zlín*. January, 23, 1939.

have to clearly say that it is truly too much for us and that we cannot bear it and thus we will not take it."[373] After making the argument in 1937 in his book, *Budujme stát pro 40,000,000,* that Czechoslovakia needed to increase its population density to roughly that of Belgium's in order to compete among the advanced nations of the world, Jan's concern about overpopulation was particularly shallow.[374] Indeed, what he was really afraid of had little to do with population density. His fear was that the country would be inundated with Jews. In the same article he overtly separated the refugees into co-nationals and foreigners, by which he meant Jews. It was the latter that should not receive a welcome in the Second Republic. "We do not have any race hate for the Jews. But we understand that they could share their own unwanted danger with us, which would easily endanger the entire Czechoslovak nation…It is extremely rare that one of them feels nationally Czech."[375] As with most things in the company town, the attitude of the boss was put into action by the city in short order: two weeks after the article the city council banned all "refugees from foreign areas" from living or working in Zlín.[376]

AND END TO COSMOPOLITANISM: WORLD WAR TWO AND NATIONAL CHAUVINISM

From the first account of employees' nationalities within Czechoslovakia in 1937 until Jan's article in January 1939, the intersection of nationalism and management steadily increased. Yet Jan's newly found nationalism did not interfere with the nation-free shopping experience at Bat'a stores. The customer first policies would only be undone after the Nazi invasion of Czecho-Slovakia in March, 1939. Then, the profoundly democratic shopping experience came to be dismantled by the occupational authorities'

373 J. Bat'a. "Kam s uprchlíky?" Zlín. October 31, 1938.
374 Jan Antonín Baťa. *Budujme stát (pro 40,000.000 lidí)*. Ve Zlíně: Tisk, 1937.
375 J. Bat'a. "Kam s uprchlíky?" Zlín. October 31, 1938.
376 City Council minutes. November, 1938. SoKA-AMZ K. 72.

concepts of racial hierarchy. Two examples, that of cashier Helena Kutějová, and the aryanization of a store in Hodonín, reveal how the supra-national policies of the Bat'a retail stores were undone by a rising tide of intolerance.

Helena Kutějová was working as a cashier at the Bat'a store in Trenčín, which had become a part of newly independent Slovakia in March of 1939, when Bat'a social inspectors first heard of her. Previously, the personnel department had not given much attention to either the store, or Kutějová. Both were minor characters in Bat'a's vast retail system; Trenčín was a relatively quiet town of 12,000, only 70 kilometers away from Zlín, and Kutějová a twenty-something cashier without a negative mark on her record. Authorities took notice, however, when the store suddenly re-organized its sales department.[377] This unusual act led to an inquiry from the sales department's social inspector, Karel Huták. Huták discovered that the store's saleswomen had all been rearranged because the mild-mannered Kutějová had attempted suicide sometime at the end of March, 1939.

After launching an investigation into her suicide attempt, which had become standard procedure by the late 1930s, the social inspector found national conflict to be the reason why Kutějová tried to take too many of the pills her doctor prescribed "for calm and sleep."[378]

> Kutějová is Czech, the other personnel of Slovak nationality, including the manager and his family. The store is often politicized, so much so that even customers have written warning letters to Zlín.
>
> This influence had a negative effect on sales. The manager became interested in enterprises other than our store. He began thinking about retirement, but he

[377]Socialní Služba prodejního oddělení, 1936-1939. MZA-ZLÍN. K. 0 Č. 37
[378]Ibid.

needed more cash to do so. Because of this she felt uncomfortable and that she had to leave.[379]

While leaving much to the imagination, the Social Department's investigation into Kutějová's dramatic act showed the sharp upswing in nationalist fervor following the Nazi occupation. A store that had served the community for fifteen years turned into a place of nationalist conflict. Kutějová's service was called into question by the townspeople solely for her place of origin. Through this incident we see the ways in which political change affected the everyday lives of people living in small-town Slovakia, as the Nazi occupation and the dissolution of Czechoslovakia significantly undermined the supra-national promise of shopping and working at Bat'a.

Moreover, the Nazi anti-Jewish measures caved in the customer first policies of the Bat'a Corporation. One example, in particular, exemplifies the dismantling of Bat'a's supra-national policy; the aryanization of an otherwise run-in-the-mill retail store in Hodonín.

The pedicurists at the Bat'a "House of Service" in Hodonín, a small town on the border of Slovakia and Moravia, were having a typically busy Wednesday afternoon in 1941 when Mrs. Marie Tuplerová of Hodonín walked into the salon. Tuplerová walked past the small, crowded waiting room and directly to the pedicure "cabins," where she cut in front of a customer getting ready to sit in one of the recently vacated high-backed, black leather chairs used for pedicures. Before Tuplerová could sit down however, Alice Králičková, a pedicurist at Bat'a for seven months, pointed to the woman behind Tuplerová and explained that customers were received in the order in which they appeared, to which Tuplerová replied, "that woman is a Jew!" Králičková paused before

[379]Ibid.

saying that Jew or not, the company's policy was first come first served. Tuplerová shouted in response, “That woman is a Jew and you are protecting her!” and then stormed out of the store.

Tuplerová then walked directly to the police station, some one hundred meters away. There, she voiced a complaint against Králičková and the Bat'a store in general for being Jew friendly. Her complaint received immediate attention, as Warrant Officer Ertlem quickly contacted the government commissar of Hodonín, a Dr. Karl Bosse. Ertlem also immediately sent for Králičková upon hearing the story. The pedicurist arrived a few hours later and gave her side of the story. “The woman in the waiting room was Jewish. But then she left (Tuplerová) immediately and I could not even get the opinion of my manager.” Dr. Bosse then sent for the manager of the store in Hodonín, Jan Trlida, to arrive at the police station first thing the next morning.

Trlida would later describe the encounter in a report to corporate headquarters in Zlín:

> On the day of July 31, 1941 I was called on by Warrant Officer Ertlem to go with him to city hall so that I could meet with the governmental commissar Dr. Boss. I immediately complied with him and went to city hall.
>
> Mr. governmental commissar Dr. Boss had maybe two pages of documents about the normalization of businesses on the table...
>
> The commissar said to me that I probably already knew why I was there and that the Gestapo was also aware of this thing. Then he said that they have discovered that the manager of our sales department makes aryan staff wash the feet of Jews and he said loudly, ‘Jews can wash their filthy paws at home and not in the Bat'a pedicurist.’ He said it was misconduct, which could only be fixed with a radical remedy. Furthermore, we employ staff that privileges the Jews. They have

> apparently found a woman working for us who has had an affair with a Jew, and even lived with him. He then said that we knew about these Jew lovers and because of this we could suffer. Then he elaborated in detail what mistakes we were making and what the new situation required.[380]

Over the next week, Trlida met twice more with Boss, who became much more congenial, informing him that it was really Tuplerová's fault for not speaking German immediately so that the store clerk would realize who she was dealing with. Trlida then implemented a policy to where Jews could only be serviced after hours, one day a week, and hung a sign in the storefront in German and Czech reading "Jews are Forbidden to Enter." "On my next visit I informed Mr. General Commissar about my solution. (He) was satisfied with what I had done and promised that he would be visiting the store very soon as a customer."[381]

The incident in the pedicurist cabins in Hodonín is striking evidence of the everyday erosion of civility brought about by Nazi racial policies, for it is a story of essentially a woman who used her race to demand preferential service because she did not want to wait. Yet it is also a fascinating report because it illustrates the demise of the Bat'a customer first philosophy in occupied Europe (a philosophy that would not return to the Eastern Bloc for fifty years). No longer would first come, first served apply. In addition, we see how a Bat'a manager negotiated the new race policies and Nazi authorities. For it seems the Bat'a training of putting business over politics helped to allow Trlida to put his store above his morality. He found a solution to keep the business moving, gaining a new customer in the process. But while doing so he moved away from the cosmopolitanism of the company.

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[380] Prodejní Oddělení. MZA-ZLÍN. K.1530 č.72.
[381] Ibid.

CONCLUSION

The internationalism of the Bat'a Company offers an important corrective to the overwhelming focus on nationalists' activities within interwar Czechoslovakia. From retail policies that demanded all customers receive equal treatment to the international brigades of youth working in Zlín, the Bat'a kingdom challenged its subjects to think globally. Thus, as well as asking, "how people act nationally," as a recent book on the Nazi occupation of Prague insists, we should also ask how they acted internationally, how globalization worked within the Czechoslovak context, and how modernity was perceived as universal.[382] True, the cosmopolitanism of the company was continually challenged by larger nationalist discourses in interwar Europe. But the global corporation had very little interest in nationalist prejudice. As a result it tried to create a caste of people who traveled widely with the belief in a mission to shoe the world, putting the customer, and profits, first. Ultimately, the mantra was undone within Central Europe, though carried on elsewhere and brought back into the region today.

In the end, the role of Bat'a in interwar Czechoslovakia reveals a fascinating experiment with cosmopolitanism that had lasting consequences. While faltering in the face of the increased nationalism of the late 1930s, Bat'a internationalism helped smooth the transition into the Nazi period in Zlín, provided its elite with a remarkable flexibility to settle abroad, and laid the ideological foundation for one of the first global corporations. Furthermore, within Czechoslovak society, the fluidity of the Bat'a name, which vacillated between national hero to national problem, illustrated the ways in which rationalization provoked conflicts and alliances across and within national communities. Rationalization provided another way to identify oneself in the interwar period. It was an identification that caused significant discord within communist as well as nationalist

[382] Bryant, 2009.

groups. Yet these conflicts, at least for the nationalists faded away in light of Bata's tremendous growth during the Great Depression and increasing Nazi pressure on Czechoslovakia. Bat'a became by the end of the period appropriated by nationalists, and the company, finally fully accepted into the nation, quickly sought out a voice in national politics. This led to the height of the company's influence in Czechoslovakia during the short-lived Second Republic. As the Nazis moved in, though, the company's best and brightest, steeped in the ethos of internationalism, left to go abroad and establish factories and headquarters in the Americas.

Chapter 7: Imagining Baťa in the World of Tomorrow: The Baťa Company, Czechoslovakia, and the 1939 New York World's Fair

"Our (pavilion) humbly cowered next to the mighty Soviets'. Humbly is an understatement. But we had just been absorbed and impoverished by Hitler, and the majority of our exhibitions did not make it across the sea. The architecture was not resourceful, and the ground was poor... Inside were some Škoda products, a little glass, and then Baťa, Baťa, and Baťa. I forgot the rest, probably because there was nothing else worth talking about, not even one gimmick."[383]

In June 1939, Journalist Edvard Valenta traveled as a part of Jan Baťa's entourage to New York City. Valenta, brought to document the shoe magnate's international trip that was part vacation, part business, and part escape, wrote the above description of his visit to the Czechoslovak Pavilion at the New York World's Fair 1939-40 (NYWF) years later, after the Bat'a Company had long stopped being a central player in the affairs of Czechoslovakia. Still, Valenta's description raises important questions about Baťa's role in the politics and society of Czechoslovakia during the crisis years of 1938-40. For while the fair asked its participants to imagine themselves in the utopian future of "The World of Tomorrow," by the time the gates opened, Czechoslovakia's future was very much in doubt. Officials had been replaced, exhibits seized, and funds cut off. The state ceased to exist. Yet because a group of American sympathizers and Czech and Slovak dissidents forming a government-in-exile stepped in to finish the exhibit, the state maintained a place within one of the grandest celebrations of modernity the world had ever seen. And Baťa was at its center. Why? Why did Baťa come to have over 30 percent of the entire Czechoslovak exhibition in "The World of Tomorrow?" What was the substance of the display? How did the company's relationship to the state change after the political upheavals of 1938 and 1939? Finally, did the company remain representative of the goals of the government-in-exile and vice-versa?

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383 Edvard Valenta, *Žil jsem s miliardářem* (Brno: Blok, 1990), 110-111. All translations are the author's, unless otherwise noted.

It was a time of uncertainty; by the time the Bat'a entourage arrived in New York, Czechoslovakia had been occupied for three months by the Nazis, and their company's future was in doubt. German authorities had briefly detained Jan in November, the German wing of Baťa had separated from its parent company, and the German press had begun suggesting to its public Jan's possible Semitic heritage. After the invasion, it was a smart guess that the Nazis would take control over the factories in Zlín.[384] In the chaos, Jan moved his family to London at the end of March and began preparing plans for a new factory town and headquarters. Company heads decided on an area around Belmont, Maryland. In May, Jan assembled an entourage of assistants, artists, and family to leave for New York. The Baťa group entered the country through tourist visas, granted them to see the NYWF.

When they arrived, the Czechoslovak pavilion had already become the first of several pavilions orphaned in the wake of Nazi aggression, and the pavilion they were supposed to spend the majority of their time in was not particularly impressive to them.[385] Instead, like the majority of visitors, they spent most of their time at the more amusing parts of the fair, reveling in the extravagance of Billy Rose's Aquacade and the modern utopia of GM's Futurama. And yet, the Czechoslovak pavilion was not so out of place in this futuristic milieu. For amid GM's Futurama, the Fair's own Democracity, and Ford's Motor City, Baťa's progressive vision stood at the center of the nation's display, with a stunning wooden model of Zlín, and a giant painted-glass panorama of company founder Tomáš's life.

It was also there that the Baťa Company, after the dismemberment of the Czechoslovak state, became unhinged from the future of Czechoslovakia. For already in

384 "Bata Held by Mistake," *The New York Times*, November 21, 1938.
385 Valenta, *Žil jsem s miliardářem*, 115.

May of 1939, Jan was looking to make a new start in the United States, deeply interested in the American public and losing his influence in Czech politics. For Jan's personal rivalry with Eduard Beneš, his company's long-running feud with the communists, his ill-timed support of U.S. Senator Millard Tydings, his refusal to accept State Department requests that he publicly denounce the Protectorate, and the collective ill-will of the New England Shoe Manufacturers' Union would all soon conspire to push Baťa headquarters out of the United States and out of Czechoslovakia. Baťa's once-dominant voice in the making of Czechoslovakia was drowned out by the vicissitudes of the Second World War. Its saga on the east coast of America from 1938-41, in which the NYWF played a sizable role, dramatically altered the future of the company and guaranteed that future generations of Americans would have little to no knowledge of Baťa. The NYWF, therefore, marked both the high and low tide of the company's political and social significance in the United States and Europe. The story of Baťa at the NYWF reveals a detailed look at how and why the Baťa vision lost its traction in the opening stages of World War II.

In the first stage, from the summer of 1937 to October of 1938, we see a company interested in expanding its market share in the United States and introducing the Bat'a model to Americans, a model not especially aligned with the goals of the First Republic of Czechoslovakia (CSR). The second stage, corresponding to the short-lived Second Republic of Czecho-Slovakia, suggests that *Bat'aism,* or the company's operating system, became closely aligned with the goals of the state. During this stage company executive and long-time proselyte of the Baťa philosophy Dominik Čipera became Minister of Public Works. In this position of considerable power, he set about Batafying Czecho-Slovakia by organizing labor camps in a fashion similar to those advocated by Baťa chief Jan a year earlier. In addition, in the shrunken state, Baťa's share of the GDP grew

significantly. So too did its voice in the NYWF. Indeed, during the Second Republic the company became the dominant voice of the pavilion, its floor space becoming one-third of the entire building. The third stage, from March 15, 1939 to the close of the NYWF in the fall of 1940, traces the near-total loss of control the company experienced in relation to the pavilion. We see Bat'a's vision becoming a palimpsest behind nationalist rhetoric and themes of victimization. Furthermore, the third stage reveals a company uprooted, fragmented, and ultimately at odds with the United States' federal government, which expelled Bat'a chief executive Jan from the United States in 1940. Thus, the Bat'a Company's dreams, much in line with the overall style and message of the NYWF, became orphaned by both the country of their origin and the country of their destination. For it seems that while company founder Tomáš's progressive confidence about the future was on display in New York, American and Czech commentators and organizers turned Czechoslovakia's exhibition into a symbol of a fearful present and a longed-for past. The company's cosmopolitanism and high modernist agenda no longer fit the discourse surrounding the victimized nation of Czechoslovakia. Its rational façade had been peeled away by the chaos and uncertainty of the Nazi takeover.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

World's fairs have been approached by historians from a variety of angles in order to shed light on the ways in which gender, race, nation, and class have intersected in these grand presentations of modernity. Mostly, historians have mined the fairs of the 19th century to ask questions about the makings of modern society.[386] Of those who have

[386] Of the many articles on world's fairs, perhaps the more influential are Julie K Brown's, *Contesting Images: Photography and the World's Columbian Exposition*. University of Arizona Press, 1994. Astrid Böger, *Envisioning the Nation: The Early American World's Fairs and the Formation of Culture*. Frankfurt

looked at interwar fairs, most present foreign pavilions as singular manifestations of a national identity. And while the best of their work provides insights into how elites imagined their communities on a global stage, explores technology, or compares one national exhibit to another, few focus on the internal and often messy politics that occurred within national exhibits.[387] Similarly, scholarly work on the NYWF has delved into the mindset of the fair's design board and excavated the contents of its foreign pavilions' national narratives, but has shown little interest in the ways in which internal structures and meanings of exhibits changed over their short lifespans.[388]

Still, historians have found the Czechoslovak pavilion at the NYWF a fascinating subject. Two articles cover Czechoslovakia at the NYWF of 1939, and both have made significant contributions to our understanding of the subject. Marco Duranti's "Utopia, Nostalgia, and the World War at the 1939-40 New York World's Fair," finds a fundamental change between the utopian spirit of 1939 and the nostalgic bent of the fair in 1940, arguing that with the outbreak of war, the so-called orphan pavilions of Czechoslovakia and Poland led to an inherent conflict between the "Theme Committee's linear conception of time" and the "Czech and Polish prophecies of national resurrection."[389] Yet, as Duranti is not interested in the contents of the pavilion or in its development, his conception of the Czechoslovak Pavilion ignores that, unlike other foreign pavilions, original plans called for Czechoslovakia to be in step with the

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am Main: Campus Verlag, 2010. Christopher Robert Reed, *"All the World Is Here": The Black Presence at White City*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000.

387 For example, Cristina Della Coletta, *World's Fairs Italian Style: The Great Exhibitions in Turin and Their Narratives, 1860-1915*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006.

388 David Nye, "Ritual Tomorrows: The NYWF of 1939," *History and Anthropology* (June 1992). Nicholas J. Cull, "Overture to an Alliance: British Propaganda at the New York World's Fair. 1939-1940," *Journal of British Studies* (July 1997): 325–54. Anthony Swift, "The Soviet World of Tomorrow at the New York World's Fair, 1939," *Russian Review* 57, no. 3 (1998): 364–79.

389 Marco Duranti, "Utopia, Nostalgia and the World War at the 1939-40 New York World's Fair," *Journal of Contemporary History* 41, no. 4 (2006): 663–683.

American futurism on display in New York. Duranti entirely leaves Baťa out, effectively flattening the complicated story of how elites imagined Czechoslovakia. Still, Duranti's original insights are crucial to understand why and how the Fair changed over time from utopianism to amusement, and his useful conception of the tension between the NYWF's theme and the orphan pavilions is central to the argument that Baťa lost its place in the imagining of Czechoslovakia in the world of tomorrow. The other, slightly less provocative but solidly written piece on the Czechoslovaks at the NYWF is from Slovak historian Slavomír Michálek.[390] Michálek traces the financial side of the pavilion in order to follow the often complex story of its making. He finds that the pavilion came to be taken over after the Nazi invasion in March of 1939 by Americans of Czech and Slovak descent, high-ranking American officials, and a handful of defiant Czechs and Slovaks. Interestingly, while following the money used to design, build, and operate the pavilion, Michálek does not mention the pavilion's largest exhibitor, nor does he spend much time on the reception of the exhibits. Baťa again is left out. Thus, both of the only historical accounts of the Czechoslovak pavilion leave out its central exhibit.

Similarly, in the scholarly literature on Baťa there is a void as to how the company propagated its message through exhibitions around the world as well as a hole in our understanding as to how and why the company transitioned into the Americas at the start of World War II.[391] In addition, little has been done to connect Baťa to other high-modernist projects that were happening around the world at the time.[392] The NYWF,

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[390] Slavomír Michálek, "Československo na svetovej výstave 1939 v New Yorku," Historický časopis 52, no. 4 (2004): 631–652.

[391] Of the recent studies which have come out, Martin Marek and Vit Strobach's "Batismus, urychlená modernita a průkopníci práce. Personální politika Baťova koncernu a řízené přesuny zaměstnanců v letech 1938-1941," *Moderní dějiny, Časopis pro dějiny 19. a 20. století* (Modern History, Journal for History of 19th and 20th Centuries) 18, no. 1 (2010): 103-153 is the most informative as to how the company made decisions about sending large groups of employees abroad.

[392] Recent provocative studies into Baťaism and its place in its context include Stanislav Holubec's "Silní milují život. Utopie, ideologie, a biopolitika baťovského Zlína," *Kuděj* 11, no. 2 (2009): 30-55, Martin

then, allows us to see both the relative influence of Baťa in Czechoslovakia in a time of crisis, how Baťa came to America, as well as how the grand modernist project on Flushing Meadows fit in with the grand modernist project in Zlín.

BAŤA'S PLACE IN THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

By the time news of the NYWF made its way to Zlín, which was at least as early as November 1937, the Baťa company had exhibited their products as well as their social message at exhibitions around the world for over a decade. In fact, in just the five years from 1934 up to 1939, the company funded 19 major displays, ranging from airplane trade shows to a massive poster project in the Moravian countryside.[393] And while the purpose of these exhibits was surely to increase brand-name recognition and impress customers, the company was equally interested in propagating its philosophy, which it increasingly saw as a solution to the world's economic and political problems. Perhaps the centerpiece for the company's drive to infiltrate Czechoslovak politics in the late 1930s was Jan Baťa's "Budujeme stát pro 40,000,000 (Let Us Build a State for 40,000,000)", which essentially laid out Baťa's political platform calling for lower taxes, a more motorized society, better railways, more air links to the outside world, technical and administrative reforms, business school reforms, and reforming the "Old Tradesman's Council."[394] Jan's book corresponded with a much publicized trip around

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Marek and Vit Strobach's "Batismus, urychlená modernita a průkopníci práce," Katrin Klingan and Kerstin Gust, eds., *A Utopia of Modernity: Zlín* (Berlin: Jovis Verlag, 2009).

393 The nine major exhibits were as follows: Baťa Exhibit at Prague's Spring/Fall Trade Fair, 1934-39; World Fair of Posters in Zlín, 1935; Brno Provincial Fair, 1935; The National Airplane Fair in Prague, 1937; World's Fair, Paris, 1937; Trade Fair, Cairo, 1938; Slavic Exhibition in Uherské Hradiště, 1937; NYWF 1939-40; May semi-permanent exhibition in Zlín, 1938-39. Records of the Baťa company's foray into all of these exhibitions can be found in the Moravský Zemský Archiv-Brno, pracoviště Zlín (hereafter MZA-ZLIN).

394 Jan. A. Baťa, *Budujme stát pro 40,000,000* (Zlín: Tisk, 1937).

the world, where he became quite taken with Mussolini's fascist Italy.[395] Rumors began to circulate about a potential run for the presidency. Accompanying Jan's increased national presence, the company put on two exhibits the next year in Prague and Zlín to convince Czechoslovaks of the wisdom in the Baťa system. "Baťa's Plan for an Ideal City" consisted of a large-scale model of the factory complex of Zlín and accompanying slogans and brochures on the Baťa way of life. The exhibit was accompanied by a lengthy, and curiously unpublished, book, "Ideální průmyslové město budoucnosti" (The Ideal Industrial Town of the Future), which has received considerable attention from scholars of the Baťa phenomenon for its comprehensive vision of *Baťaism*.[396]

Baťaism was a brand of industrial paternalism along the lines of Fordism, where workers were given relatively good wages, health care, education, and housing, in exchange for loyalty and obedience. (Baťa also borrowed extensively from the practices of the American shoe company Endicott-Johnson). As was common to industrial utopias, *Baťaism* held that technology was teleological. Machines were to eventually overcome all of modernity's problems. Furthermore, the ideal city was to be thoroughly rationalized; every section of the city would be planned from above by urban planners and city officials. Work, as embodied by the factory buildings, was central. All other aspects of life were to emanate outward from the factory complex along broad, well-paved streets. Nationalism would fade as men organized around economic competition. Time management, popularized by Frederick Winslow Taylor, was a foundational goal, not only at work but at all times. Indeed, modern life was to be organized down to the

[395] The clearest evidence of Jan's fascination with fascist Italy can be found in Jan's articles in the newspaper Zlín, in March 1937. He apparently received a good deal of criticism for these remarks, and they may have been the reason he never ran for elected national office. For rumors about his political ambitions see Ivan Brož, *Chlapi od Baťů: Osudy baťovců v době kdy šefoval Jan Baťa* (Praha: Epoch, 2002).

[396] See, for example, Ladislava Horňáková, "Ideální průmyslové město firmy Baťa. Teoretické studie ideálních průmyslových měst a jejich aplikace v praxi."

second.[397] In addition to its commitment to Fordism and Taylorism, the Baťa biopolitic was informed by the Protestant abstinence movement, Italian fascism, and the Soviet cult of the working-class, especially the Stakhanovite movement.[398] All of these principles, of course in the muted tones of reality, were on display in the Baťa world headquarters of Zlín and its satellite towns where competition was essential to work and life, the leader's will was unquestioned, and modern man supposedly lived out a highly rational life. And at least to the company men, these principles were bringing about a new, improved, way of living and were the solution to the deleterious effects of modernization. Consider chief company propagandist Antonín Cekota's article "Zlín's Work and Sport" written during the height of the Great Depression: "Today, when all the world is uncertain, unsatisfied and on edge, our Zlín stands like an island from another world. An island which crowds of visitors wander so that they may witness with their own eyes the truth of our reputation and the bounty of our work, which brings wealth and satisfaction ... Assertiveness, determination, the taste for work, the battle for first place, the competition for the best result, this is not a slogan but a fact which directly charges the air of Zlín."[399] Thus, for the Baťamen, the future's success depended on the expansion of the Zlín model throughout the world. And while *Baťaism* changed over time, one of its constants was futurism, with Tomáš Baťa's maxim in 1931, "The future will be better than the present, but only for those who have confidence in the future," still a key component of the philosophy in 1939.

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[397] There are several excellent resources for the student of Baťism, and undoubtedly the best way to access this philosophy is a thorough reading of the company and town's main newspaper, *Sdělení (*later to become *Zlín)*, where company elites routinely publicized their visions for the future. See, for example, "Baťovi mladí muži roku 1974," *Zlín,* May 21, 1934.

[398] For a very good discussion of the Baťabiopolitic see Stanislav Holubec, "Silní milují život. Utopie, ideologie, a biopolitika batovského Zlína," *Kuděj* 11, no. 2 (2009): 30-55.

[399] Antonín Cekota, "Zlínská práce a sport," *Zlín*, August 20, 1934.

With this in mind, the designers of the NYWF and the Baťa Company held strikingly similar visions. Consider the fair's central exhibit, the great Perisphere and its Democracity, and the Baťa Company's plans for greater Zlín. Inside the Perisphere's hollow ball was Democracity, where visitors sat in a rotating auditorium to watch a six-minute performance about Centerton, a "perfectly integrated garden city of tomorrow." Here urban planning had brought order and simplicity to the everyday lives of a million people.[400] Indeed, an article written at the opening of the fair by one of its chief designers Robert Kohn claimed that the goals of the fair were to show "laymen" the interpenetration of science and art into all the "functions of modern life," and by so doing have them embrace the progressive theme of the fair.[401] Much like Kohn and the other designers of the NYWF, the Baťa company envisioned a highly ordered garden city to connect all parts of modern life. František Lydie Gahura's city plan for Zlín held the same characteristics as the NYWF's Democracity. The two plans looked strikingly similar. This shared vision suggests the internationalism, as James C. Scott has argued, of the high modernist mentality. Baťa was a key corporate player in the attempt to rationalize everyday life, a project that knew no national boundaries.[402]

It is little surprise, then, that Baťa executives took an early interest in the NYWF. In 1937, the chief designer of the Baťa exhibit inside the proposed Czechoslovak industrial pavilion, Dr. Josef Černovský, wrote a list of requests to the commercial-political section of the Central Union of Czechoslovak Industry, which was originally responsible for the Czechoslovak exhibit. He requested 350 square meters of space inside

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[400] The Perisphere was designed by Henry Dreyfuss. See Barabara Cohen, Steven Heller, Seymour Chwast, *1939 New York World's Fair: Trylon and Perisphere* (New York: Harry Abrams, 1984).

[401] Robert D. Kohn, "Social Ideals in a World's Fair," The North American Review 247, no. 1 (Spring, 1939): 115-120.

[402] Scott defines "high-modernism" in James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (Yale, 1998).

of the industrial pavilion, and a place for Zlín in all of the exhibits concerning education, advertisement, printing, medicine, housing, urban areas, photography, and art. Clearly, Baťa imagined its company town as a center-point for all of Czechoslovakia. And yet Černovský also requested that Baťa be granted permission to construct and occupy its own pavilion if it so chose. This request suggests that though yearning to be representative of the state, the company would have little problem on its own, as a representative of *Baťaism* rather than First Republic democracy.[403] This last request was rejected by the Czechoslovak Exhibition Committee (ČVV, formed in January 1938) which had to abide by World's Fair regulations that did not allow foreign companies free-standing structures. In addition, the idea of putting Zlín and Baťa in nearly every display unsettled several key members of the planning committee. Ladislav Feierband in particular worried about allowing any one company too strong of a voice.[404] Yet while unable to obtain its own pavilion, and unlikely to be able to place Zlín in all cultural and social displays, the company did receive its requested space in the industrial pavilion. Thus, it seems that while Baťa wielded considerable influence on government elites, the diversity of interests in the CSR held in check its desire to be the conceptual underpinning of the state.

Undeterred, Černovský along with his assistant Karel Astra and architects Robert Forster and Josef Polívka began designing the Baťa exhibit. They had two goals: to sell shoes to Americans and to promote Baťa's social program.[405] "We have to get as much prestige for the company name as possible, to use the press and public's interest in

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[403] Letter from Černovský to Ústřední svaz Československých průmyslníků, November 9, 1937, Karton 1, Světová Výstava: New York, Národní Archiv (here-after referred to as SV-NY, NA).
[404] Minutes from March 15, 1938 meeting at the Central Union for Czechoslovak Industry. Karton 5, SV-NY, NA.
[405] Josef Černovsky, "Návrhy pro Baťovu exposici v New-Yorku".Karton 1.SV-NY, NA.

solutions to social questions. It is necessary to counteract the propaganda that depicted Baťa factories as asocial and their products as being dumped onto the market."[406] They divided the exhibit into two parts; one would be the "Culture of Footwear," where American visitors could see the progress made from "the uncomfortable footwear of the worker 50 years ago to the comfort of today."[407] In this first part, there would be displays on the progress of Czechoslovakia's shoe industry and on civilization's "reliance on footwear." For the planners, the most important part of the "Culture of Footwear" would display the standard of shoes in the Republic of Czechoslovakia and the United States. Here, there would be a mannequin of a "fashionable American lady" looking at "at least 30 pairs of shoes."[408]

While trying to gain customers by tying Bat'a into human progress, the design also tried to convince Americans of the Bat'a way of life. "For American politicians and bureaucrats the most important problems of today are questions of social welfare. We have to recognize this in order to show that Baťa in the Czechoslovak Republic is the most advanced company in regards to social issues ... We have to see to it that, should the American press refer to issues of social welfare, they find that Baťa is the most progressive in social issues."[409] To do so, the men proposed a model of Zlín, similar to the models already being made for the exhibits in Prague and Zlín, built out of rare woods from around the world. In addition, they hatched an idea to show Tomáš Baťa's life, and the development of Zlín, in a stained glass panorama. Portraits of Jan and Tomáš were to hang on the walls. Pamphlets about life in the company towns and Baťa's social

406 "Návrhy pro Baťovu exposici v New-Yorku," Baťa's Collection.SV-NY, NA.
407 Ibid.
408 Ibid.
409 Ibid.

mission would accompany the displays, and efforts were made to plant favorable stories in the American press.[410]

As the men sat down to design the exhibit, the company's role in the fair increased substantially when one of its own general managers, Hugo Vavrečka, was elected as chief commissioner of the Czechoslovak exhibition for the NYWF. Vavrečka's nomination came on the heels of a heated debate between government officials over the purpose of world's fairs. Two issues in particular stood out: the design of the building and the role of folk costumes. Through both, we see why Vavrečka – and why Baťa in general – found themselves well suited for the NYWF.

Organizers eventually came to an agreement that a modernist building in thr style of Bat'a's architecture would best suit the country, but only after much debate. At one of the first planning meetings of the ČVV, the Czechoslovak building at the 1937 World's Fair in Paris drew considerable criticism from the 10-member committee.[411] Jaroslav Preiss, the director of Živnostenská Bank (Tradesmen's Bank), former minister of finance – and wealthiest banker in the country – was one of the primary sources of the "many complaints about the Paris exhibition."[412] According to Preiss, the Paris exhibit was supposed to harmonize business with the state, but its design fragmented displays, causing visitors to lump together in isolated sections of the building. His solution was to make the Czech pavilion "have the appearance of one whole picture."[413]Ladislav

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410 Ibid.

411 Nevertheless, the pavilion had at least drawn international attention, which was in stark contrast to the Czechoslovak pavilion at Chicago's "A Century of Progress" exposition in 1933, a relatively simple multistory structure that was easy to negotiate but received no architectural prizes.

412 For an account of Preiss's intriguing relationship to the Castle, see Andrea Orzoff, "The Literary Organ of Politics: Tomáš Masaryk and Political Journalism 1925-1929," *Slavic Review* 63, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 275-300.

413 Minutes from March 15, 1938 meeting at the Central Union for Czechoslovak Industry, Karton 5, SV-NY, NA.

Turnovský, a government minister who had signed the contract with the NYWF, added, "The Czechoslovak pavilion in Paris was architecturally very beautiful, but it was difficult to arrange. … [For New York] we need a pavilion that is actually concerned with the exhibits and not with architectural games."[414] The ČVV therefore decided to hold a restricted contest for the pavilion, and the architectural committee selected the design of Kamil Roškot in August 1938. Roškot had worked on the Czechoslovak pavilions in Milan in 1928 and Chicago in 1933. One of his main influences was the high-modernist Le Corbusier, and his defining style was a monumental modernism of massive volume and clean lines. The Baťa company too had looked to the architect, as well as Le Corbusier, for their own projects. In fact, while working on the pavilion, Vavrečka commissioned Roškot to design apartment blocks in Zlín.[415] Roškot's design assured that the building in New York would be within budget and easy to organize, as it was specifically tailored for the purpose of easy assembly and deconstruction. Four stories tall, the building was to be 2,800 square meters, with 2,000 square meters allotted to industry, 500 to agriculture, and 300 for tourism. Working with the New York firm of Hegeman and Harris, Roškot used iron, glass, and concrete as the principle building materials. The front of the building would have a flat concrete wall, 50 meters high and with the Czechoslovak seal on its facade. The north side the building would curve in a glass oval. There would be two floors and four major halls – one entrance hall and three halls for each of the areas of Czechoslovak commerce.[416]

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414 Ibid.

415 This was Roškot's first commission for the Baťa company. František M. Černý and Vladimír Šlapeta, *Kamil Roškot (1886-1945): architektonické dílo* (Praha: NTM, 1978).

416 Letter from Jan Suchard, Secretary of the Czechoslovak exhibit, to Vavrečka, March 18, 1938, Výstavní Výbor, Karton 5, SV-NY, NA.

Another point of contention occurred over folk costumes. Both Turnovský and Preiss, though supportive of a functionalist building, wanted the pavilion's interior to satiate an anticipated American public's interest in picturesque folk customs and dress. "We don't have to fear that they will think we go to the ministries from tents in our folk costumes. … we have to have folk exhibits because Americans are very interested in them."[417] Yet their enthusiasm for folk exhibits was seen by many to be out-of-step with the streamlined style that the NYWF was promoting. V. J. Rott, chairman of the Prague Chamber of Commerce, warned against appearing too "primitive" at the World's Fair. "Czechoslovakia should show the world its major industries and not focus on anything too folkish."[418] Though folk exhibits were a staple at world fairs, Rott and several other members of the ČVV wanted Czechoslovak folk exhibits subsumed by the image of a modern Czechoslovakia ready to do business on a global level. Rott's opinion prevailed at a meeting in July 1938 when the ČVV elected Hugo Vavrečka as general commissioner for the Czechoslovak exhibition. Vavrečka stressed the importance of the pavilion conforming to the modern style of the NYWF: "It has to be a collective and not an individual fair."[419] Hence, folk displays would be subordinated to bigger and more dominant displays of industrial modernity and progress. For Vavrečka and other members of the business elite like Rott, "The World of Tomorrow" as envisioned by its American designers, shared the goals of Czechoslovakia, and they wanted their exhibit to show how Czechoslovakia fit into an American future. Given Vavrečka's position in the Baťa Company, his opinion was hardly surprising.

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[417] Minutes from March 15, 1938 meeting at the Central Union for Czechoslovak Industry. Karton 5, SV-NY, NA.
[418] Minutes from Meeting of the Československý výstavní výbor, July 22 1938, Karton 5, SV-NY, NA.
[419] Minutes from March 15, 1938 meeting at the Central Union for Czechoslovak Industry, Karton 5, SV-NY, NA.

And yet the business elite did not have carte blanche over the decision-making process in the early planning stages. For the ČVV's focus on industry created another tension between it and the Exhibition's Cultural Council (Výstavní Kulturní Rada; VKR). The VKR, a collection of artists, architects, and professors, issued a letter of protest against what they saw as a wrongheaded approach to displaying the Republic. For the artists of the VKR, what the American public needed was "to be informed above all about the comprehensive cultural endeavor of Czechoslovak democracy." The VKR composed an overarching theme for the Czechoslovak pavilion: "the State that brought democracy to central Europe."[420] The VKR wanted political achievements to be tied to industry and export, attempting to smooth the inherent conflict between democratic plurality and rationally planned paternalistic welfare programs like Baťa's. Thus, doing business with Czechoslovakia was to be linked with promoting democracy in central Europe, and not with promoting a utopian company town model. The concept received high marks from certain officials in the ČVV, like Agriculture Minister Ladislav Feierband, but the majority of officials in the pre-Munich Agreement period found the idea of insisting on political messages within company space too intrusive. A compromise was made. The VKR would have control over the Czechoslovak government building in the Hall of Nations (space that every foreign participant received), and industry would have control over the design of the much larger freestanding pavilion. In the end, no one was to stop Baťa from propagating its social program within the Czechoslovak industrial pavilion. And yet, the Baťa program would not be present in the government building.[421]

[420] Resolution, Výstavní Kulturní Rada. May 23, 1938, Karton 3, SV-NY, NA.
[421] Ibid.

A FAIR AFTER MUNICH?

The First Republic of Czechoslovakia crumbled when Neville Chamberlain and Edouard Daladier decided to placate Hitler by signing the Munich Agreement in the morning hours of September 30, 1938. Their decision left a mobilized Czechoslovakia in a state of crisis. Though the majority of the population urged President Eduard Beneš to military action, he felt it futile to fight three aggrandizing states – Germany, Hungary, and Poland – without allies.[422] His decision lost him the political support of Czechoslovaks, and his government collapsed; Beneš resigned five days after the Munich Agreement, and the Czechoslovak First Republic was no more. The Second Republic organized under Prime Minister Rudolf Beran and General Jan Syrový, who took control over a much reduced Czecho-Slovakia. On October 22, Beneš went into exile in London. The Second Czecho-Slovak Republic responded to the failure of liberal democracy by sharply moving toward the right. Beran in Prague ruled by decree and changed the constitution to circumvent minority rights. The government implemented restrictions on Jews, began curtailing free speech in the press, and ratcheted up nationalist rhetoric against the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. Leaders of the German Social Democrats, many of them refugees, were again subject to state censorship.[423] Moreover, the interwar government's earnest attempt to create a Czechoslovak identity, which was never very successful, was finally and completely abandoned. After 1938, there would no longer be a Czechoslovak option on the census; from then on one was either a Czech or a Slovak. To appease nationalist Slovaks, the state's name was divided with a hyphen; Czechoslovakia became Czecho-Slovakia. The short-lived Second Republic marked a

[422] For the public's desire to fight, see Katriel Ben-Arie, "Czechoslovakia at the Time of 'Munich:' The Military Situation." *Journal of Contemporary History* 25, (October, 1990): 431-446.
[423] Jan Kuklík, *Sociální demokraté ve Druhé republice* (Praha: Univerzita Karlova, 1993).

turning point in Czech and Slovak identities, as well as in attitudes toward multiculturalism and democracy.

Above all it was a period of insecurity and instability, one that sent the plans for the now hyphenated Czecho-Slovak pavilion into a tail-spin. Thoroughly discouraged and uncertain over funding shortly after the Munich Agreement, Vavrečka – a newly appointed Minister without portfolio in the Beran Cabinet – announced to his personnel in New York and participating companies that the pavilion would be abandoned. Numerous industries had been lost with the Nazi annexation of the Sudetenland, and the pavilion no longer seemed financially tenable.

Yet Vavrečka had miscalculated the mood of the country, even the mood of his own company. For the announcement of the cancellation prompted a wide array of vendors and officials to write letters of protest. A representative from the Pilsner Urquell Importing Co. implored, "We would like to impress upon your Excellency with the fact that more than ever this representation of Czechoslovakia must take place. … There is a deep feeling of indignation in America about the fate of Czechoslovakia. … The three big firms – Baťa, Škoda, and the Citizens' Brewery of Plzeň – should stand together in making the representation possible."[424] Flooded with similar letters, Vavrečka soon changed his mind, and wrote to the Ministry of Public Works to continue the project. The ministry would certainly not deny him this request, as longtime general manager of Baťa and Mayor of Zlín Dominik Čipera had been appointed minister in October. Though it remains unclear who ordered the exhibition to continue, it seems that within a few days of discovering Vavrečka's renewed faith in the pavilion, Čipera agreed to continue funding the exhibit, though with alterations. The industrial pavilion would be reduced in

[424]Letter from Arthur Kallman to Vavrečka.October 3, 1938, Karton 14, SV-NY, NA.

size from 2,800 square meters to 1,600, and the German and Ruthenian (Ukrainian) minorities – who had been located in recently annexed territories – would no longer have any representation inside what had become a Czech and Slovak space.[425] Now it was not a matter of exclusion; the "Czecho-Slovaks" had no claims to represent Germans or other non-Czecho-Slovak minorities.

Yet this reduction in size left the Baťa exhibit unscathed. There was to be no reduction in its size, which meant that slightly more than one-third of the entire pavilion would be devoted to Baťa. In addition, a plan to create a nationwide exhibit, "We Will Build the Czechoslovakia of Tomorrow," gained traction among Baťa executives. In October 1938, Černovský wrote a pamphlet titled "Výstavnictví" (Exhibitors) that argued that "truly in today's time we have 10 times the responsibility to exhibit. The whole world knows now who Czechoslovakia is. It (the Munich Agreement) was the most expensive propaganda in world history."[426] Clearly inspired by the NYWF, company men first developed the plan to place Zlín at the center of Czechoslovakia's future. "We have had hundreds of exhibitions about the past. We have not had one about the future, not even one about how things will look for the next generation."[427] As the CSR came apart, it appears that the exhibition became even more important, as Baťa sought to direct the new state closer to its own operational philosophy. With the state shrinking in size, Baťa's goal to be at the center of a new Czecho-Slovak future became attainable.

Of course, this is not to suggest that the longstanding opposition within Czech society to Baťa simply melted away. In fact, the handicrafts lobby, long an opponent of the Baťa system, tried to minimize Baťa's place at the NYWF. The group's chief

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[425] Minutes from Exhibition Committee meeting, October 22, 1938, Karton 5, SV-NY, NA.
[426] J. Černovský "Výstavnictví" Oct. 1938, Karton 1, SV-NY, NA.
[427] "Stálé pracovní výstavy," *Zlín.* May 4, 1938.

representative Jan Suchard wrote in a letter to Jan Baťa, "We dismiss the argument that if it is technologically and organizationally efficient, then it should be done. This does not take into account the all-around effect of our part in the world's fair."[428] For Suchard, Czecho-Slovak industry should not have been tied to the high-modernism on display in New York. Such opposition, though, was brushed aside as Baťa became increasingly in control of the exhibit. After all, complaints about the exhibition went to either Čipera or Vavrečka, both Baťamen.

As opponents were left ineffective, the company shipped its exhibition materials to New York. While most businesses planned to wait until the building was completely finished, which was projected to be sometime in March 1939, Baťa shipped its materials across the Atlantic during the winter of 1938-39. Among these items were five 20-by-10-foot stained glass panels presenting Tomáš Baťa's life. Cyril Bouda's impressive glass panorama, named "Hymn of Work," exported the legend of Baťa's rise from poverty to riches through hard work. This graphic history of the company began with a larger-than-life Baťa making shoes by hand and ended with a mosaic of the factory complex in Zlín. The glass was to fill the curved oval windows of the second floor of the pavilion, coloring the entire second floor with the legend of Baťa. A cargo of rare woods arrived with the glass. This wood was to make a large model of Zlín, from the hospital to the factory. In addition, all of the material for the "Culture of Footwear" display arrived in New York around the same time. Because most of the material for the Baťa display arrived in New York before March 1939, the company had no trouble covering its allotted floor space in the pavilion.[429] The Baťa designers, Černovský and Karl Astra, did

[428] Suchard to Baťa. December 16, 1938. Karton 1, SV-NY, NA.
[429] "Bata's Collection,".Karton 1, SV-NY, NA.

not dramatically deviate from their original plans. They still promoted a vision of an industrial utopia organized around the factory.

Yet this vision of progress was tempered by the instability that Baťa executives faced in light of the Nazi advance into Central Europe. Anticipating the escalation of hostilities after Munich, Jan Baťa began looking for sites overseas to settle large groups of employees and reorient the company toward North America. The United States was high on his list of possible places for a new satellite town. While most Baťa executives still looked for their futures inside of the country, their participation in the NYWF became laden with political meaning, as it prefaced an attempt to massively expand operations on the continent. In many respects the Baťa exhibit's representation of a pro-American, modernist vision became a device to convince Western countries to welcome the company into North America. The goal was to quiet the serious opposition to the Baťa brand made by powerful New England shoe manufacturers and, by so doing, warm American audiences to the idea of an American Baťa.[430] With company officials in charge of both the Ministry of Public Works and the General Commission for the World's Fair, they could use their country's pavilion at the NYWF as they saw fit. Soon this level of influence would come to an abrupt end.

THE ORPHAN PAVILION

When the sun set on New York on March 15, 1939, Oldřich Všetička, the representative for the Ministry of Public Works for the NYWF, gave up trying to contact his superiors in Prague. Having sent two telegrams, one to Čipera and the other to Vavrečka, he had received no reply. Všetička retired to his hotel in Queens, confused and

[430] The New England lobby would ultimately block the Baťa company from moving to the United States. Instead, the corporate flag went to Toronto, where it stayed until 2002, when it moved to Switzerland.

depressed. He had helped plan the exhibitions from their inception and now it looked as though all of his work at the NYWF would amount to a shell of a building filled with several tons of crated material.[431] Earlier that day the German army marched across Bohemia and Moravia under an early spring snow. The short-lived Second Republic of Czecho-Slovakia was at its end; the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia had begun. The Czechoslovak pavilion became the first "orphan" pavilion in history.

No one knew what was to become of the $975,000 exhibit, least of all the men who were running its operations.[432] At the time of the Nazi invasion, most display materials had not left Czecho-Slovakia, some had been seized on the docks in Hamburg by German officials, and the rest waited in crates in a warehouse in Queens, New York. Czecho-Slovak delegates to the NYWF had little idea how to proceed in the ensuing confusion as they awaited word from their occupied homeland. Officials in Prague, namely Vavrečka, initially called for the exhibition to continue, but had little idea as to how the Nazis would respond. The situation equally baffled American officials. *The New York Times* succinctly summed up the problem stating, "The World's Fair now has a contract with a country that no longer exists." Eight days after the invasion, the Ministry of Public Works sent a telegram to Všetička from Prague stating that the "construction of the pavilion will continue … there will not be any participation in the Hall of Nations … the State symbol and lettering will not be erected."[433] The government building was to be abandoned, but the industrial pavilion would continue. Vavrečka ordered a name change as well for the industrial pavilion; it would now be the building of the National

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[431] Všetička's private notes, April, 1939, Karton 7, SV-NY, NA.

[432] This figure is from the Minister of Finance writing in February 1939 at an exchange rate of 28 crowns to the dollar. Karton 3, SV-NY, NA. The building's cost in 2008 would be $**13,487,783, adjusted for inflation.**

[433] Telegram, Ministry of Public Works to O. Všetička, March 23, 1939, Karton 2, SV-NY, NA.

Association of Bohemian and Moravian Industry.[434] Work continued on the nearly completed building, but workers and architects were unsure whether they would receive any wages for their labor.

By the end of March, the new plans for the reduced exhibit were definitively rejected by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Berlin, Joachim von Ribbentrop. Germany, the only industrial nation not invited to participate in the NYWF, did not want the pavilion to be used as a platform for anti-Nazi propaganda. On March 31, Vavrečka sent Všetička the order to begin the total liquidation of the pavilion. This was to be carried out by selling or renting the pavilion to another country.[435] The letter made no mention to whom the building should be rented or sold.[436] Všetička loyally tried to carry out his order to sell the pavilion but was rebuffed by the administration of the World's Fair, which was "not able to recognize the authority of the present minister of public works in Prague."[437] Following the lead of the State Department, which declined to officially recognize the government of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Grover Whalen, president of the NYWF board of directors, would not allow the pavilion to be sold or rented. Prevented from carrying out his orders, Všetička had little idea how to proceed.

On April 27, Ladislav Sutnar arrived in New York with $10,000 in cash to liquidate the pavilion. One of the original designers of the government building and perhaps the country's most brilliant graphic artist, Sutnar was assigned the task of convincing American authorities to allow the sale of the pavilion. After giving money to Všetička, who had not been paid since the beginning of March, Sutnar put the rest of the

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[434] Letter from Vavrečka to Všetička, March 26, 1939, Karton 10, SV-NY, NA.
[435] Letter from Vavrečka to Všetička, March 31, 1939, Karton 3, SV-NY, NA.
[436] Vavrečka made compromises he surely never wanted to, but there is no evidence that he participated in or facilitated Nazi atrocities. He somehow managed to survive the war and the communist takeover without ever being arrested. More research needs to be done to understand the specifics of his wartime experience.
[437] Letter from J. C. Holmes to O. Všetička, April 4, 1939, Karton 4, SV-NY, NA.

money into finishing the pavilion, in direct defiance of orders. He did so at considerable risk to his family, who were placed under surveillance by the authorities in Prague.[438] Sutnar's defiance was matched by the actions of the now unemployed Czecho-Slovak ambassador in Washington, Colonel Vladimir Hurban.

From the safety of the United States, Hurban began organizing patriotic groups of Americans of Czech and Slovak heritage to donate for the completion of the building and the displays. Together with Pavel Janáček, the also defiant general consulate in New York, and the American Czecho-Slovak Committee, Hurban and Sutnar took over the final stages of construction under the protection of New York's vocally anti-fascist Mayor Fiorello La Guardia. While Vavrečka was forced to cooperate with German authorities in the Protectorate, his exhibition committee colleagues, with the help of American officials, were building an anti-Nazi organization. The German charge d'affairs in Washington realized the futility in trying to force the liquidation of the pavilion and, aside from a letter of protest, tacitly accepted the inevitability of the building remaining in Czech hands. Yet while powerless to stop the pavilion's completion in New York, Nazi authorities were successful in preventing half of all display material from leaving Europe, for customs officials confiscated 20 crates of material on the docks of Hamburg. Only 49 percent of the material scheduled to be displayed in the pavilion arrived in New York.[439] Hurban and Sutnar would have a pavilion, but they would have little with which to fill its space.

The groups who had taken over the pavilion's completion did not try to fill the emptiness but rather used the void as a political statement. In the entrance hall, a 120-word inscription greeted visitors: "The young Republic became the victim of a ruthless

[438] Iva Janáková and Steven Heller, *Ladislav Sutnar* (Prague: Orbis, 2003).
[439] Internal memo, Československý výstavní výbor, Karton 8, SV-NY, NA.

invasion which strangled the liberty of her people. More eloquently than words could express it, the emptiness that surrounds you tells the story."[440] The Czecho-Slovak delegation expressed national trauma with silent space. The pavilion's physical emptiness would be filled with rhetorical furnishings, as the opening day of the pavilion attests.

On May 31, 1939, a five-car motorcade carrying a group of high-ranking officials from the former Republic of Czechoslovakia arrived at the NYWF to officially open the Czechoslovak Pavilion. Among the group was Eduard Beneš, Col. Hurban, and George J. Janáček, the new commissioner-general for the Czechoslovak exhibition at the Fair. The automobiles stopped in front of the twin-columned Federal Building at the end of the Hall of Nations, where the Czechoslovaks stepped out to meet Mayor La Guardia and other representatives of the NYWF. The men embraced warmly and posed for press photographers before walking inside the Federal Building to eat lunch in Perylon Hall, where they raised champagne toasts to Franklin D. Roosevelt and the First Republic of Czechoslovakia. After the meal, the group continued to the dedication ceremony outside, where they gave speeches to a crowd gathered beside the 18,000-square-foot pavilion. There, under a Czechoslovak flag at half mast, a sweating LaGuardia declared that the pavilion was proof of an indelible nation unable to be conquered spiritually: "Tanks, airplanes and poison gas have not yet been invented that can conquer a nation's soul, and the Republic of Czechoslovakia has retained her soul."[441] Similarly, in the final speech of the day, Beneš claimed that Czechoslovakia was "one of the oldest countries in Europe" and rallied his listeners with forecasts of the inevitable victory of the Czechoslovak cause. He described the building as "a sanctuary of independence," a symbol of a "free

[440] Photograph, Karton 15, SV-NY, NA.
[441] Russell B. Porter, "Courage of Czechs Acclaimed at Fair," *The New York Times*, June 1, 1939: 22.

and independent Czechoslovakia of the near past, and the free and independent Czechoslovakia of the near future."[442]

Behind the men, on the building's façade, loomed the words of Jan Komenský (Comenius), the last bishop of the Brethren Unity Church, who fled Bohemia after the battle of White Mountain in 1620. In a statement with profound relevance for 1939, Komenský had proclaimed, "After the Tempest of Wrath Has Passed, the Rule of the Country Will Return to thee, O Czech People." Komenský's words, which had been added to the building after German soldiers poured across the borders of truncated Czecho-Slovakia, reinforced the opening-day rhetoric of La Guardia and Beneš and provided directions on how to read the exhibit.[443] By witnessing the Czechoslovak pavilion, the visitor would help to authenticate the ideal of a primordial, free Czechoslovak nation and its struggle for independence in a hostile Europe. Though the theme of the World's Fair was "The World of Tomorrow," the Czechoslovak exhibition had become a physical reminder of the precarious present and a longed-for past.[444]

Significantly, though, as has been seen, opening-day organizers had applied the cyclical rhetoric of Komenský to a building originally intended to project a very different vision of Czechoslovakia. The pavilion intended to show the world a state progressing toward an industrialized, rationally planned society, which was very much in step with the overall design of the NYWF. For, as visitors moved beyond the empty space of the entrance into the exhibits, the remnants of a powerful modernist vision could still be seen, as the Baťa exhibit was one of the few that remained largely unchanged. American

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442 "Text of Benes Speech at the Dedication Ceremony," *The New York Times,* June 1, 1939: 18.

443 The Czechoslovak Pavilion, photo, Karton 5, SV-NY, NA.

444 As Marco Duranti has noted, this created a tension between the pavilion's cyclical narrative and that of the linear narrative of the 1939 World's Fair. Marco Duranti, "Utopia, Nostalgia and the World War at the 1939-40 New York World's Fair," *Journal of Contemporary History* 41, no. 4 (2006): 663-683.

visitors would see the Czechoslovak version of the World of Tomorrow, the glass panels depicting Tomáš Baťa's life, and the "Culture of Footwear" that promised a "better shoe in a brighter future." They could see Zlín as they saw Democracity and the General Motors' Futurama, but it would be surprising if they came away from the exhibit connecting the Czechoslovak pavilion with the futurism of the Trylon and Perisphere.[445] The official guidebook to the NYWF would mention "the shoe king Baťa" and the wooden model of his hometown of Zlín, but not their social message. Instead, the political message that underpinned the exhibit as a whole left a more lasting impression, as Americans were inundated with an explicit narrative on the contemporary situation in Bohemia and educated on its historical past. From a pamphlet titled "Czecho-Slovakia's Sacrifice" to the frequently shown movie "The Rape of Czechoslovakia," visitors were flooded with propaganda on Czechoslovak victimization. Guests were reminded with a large wall mural that "for three hundred years Czechs and Slovaks struggled for the right to live as a free people."[446] The new pavilion organizers wanted to mobilize Americans by making them bear witness to Nazi aggression against a country that belonged to the democratic "free" world. Along with exhibits of other countries, most outstandingly the British Pavilion, the exhibit tried to influence Americans to get involved in the struggle against fascism.

As Poland, Finland, and Lithuania joined Czechoslovakia in the 1939 season as orphans at the fair, an atmosphere of doom replaced the initial optimism of the World's Fair. Doom, however, was not good for business, and after the fair closed for the 1939 season in tremendous debt, World's Fair organizers changed the progressive utopian

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445 Unfortunately, I have not been able to find a visitors comment book for the pavilion.

446 Photo. "Czechoslovak Participation at the New York World's Fair 1939" *Official Guide Book of the New York World's Fair: "Building the World of Tomorrow*," (New York: Exposition Pub, 1939).

theme to one of amusement and escape for the 1940 season. The Czechoslovak pavilion, though ill-suited for this new orientation, continued to operate throughout 1940 using funds contributed from several American Czech and Slovak aid organizations. The Baťa Company, in the meantime, had also become an orphan of sorts. For it too, the NYWF became a refuge.

During the NYWF's two years of operation the Baťa company expanded into North America and experienced its most serious crises. Tomáš Baťa Jr. and a group of high ranking company men founded Batawa, Canada, in late 1939. They tried to carry on according to the principles of Zlín, building a distinctive company town and gaining a new foothold in North America.[447] Jan, meanwhile, set to work building the next Zlín in Belcamp, Maryland, on the Chesapeake coast.

One of the first tasks before moving headquarters to North America was to win the hearts and minds of the highly trained Young Men and Young Women in the Baťa School of Work in Zlín. For, despite a decade of sending young people abroad, top leaders had their doubts about the will of the Baťa workers away from home. Vavrečka declared, "Our man does not have enough personal courage to go into the world. When I see how our people travel, I get the sense that they would rather be back with their mommies."[448] This doubt led to a series of pep talks to convince young people that what awaited them in North America would be far better than their lives in Europe. Giving a talk to the Young Women in the auditorium of the Masaryk School before he would leave the country, Jan lambasted the chaos and disorder of Eastern and Central Europe: "I am telling you how primitive these Serbs are." In a sudden reversal of the cosmopolitanism

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[447] A good account of migrating to Canada can be found in Hanns F. Skoutajan, *Uprooted and transplanted: a Sudeten odyssey from tragedy to freedom, 1938-1958* (Owen Sound: Ginger Press, 2000).
[448] Meeting of upper management, May 15, 1939. Ředitelství BŠP různé osobní záležitosti internátů 1936-1939, K.1223, č. 192, MZA-Zlín.

of Bataism, Jan informed the Young Women that "it's better to be unemployed in America than be the prime minister in Turkey."[449] In another speech to the Young Men a month later, Jan stressed the point that the workers need not fear emigration, because life was "more desirable abroad."[450]

Around the same time as Jan was giving his speeches, upper management devised criteria for who would be sent to America. They decided that the people they wanted should have language skills, musical abilities, construction skills, and could be no older than 30. They did have exceptions to the age limit: "We cannot allow even one young or old leader who has served abroad successfully or in the construction services to stay in Zlín." Still, the focus was on bringing young people across the Atlantic, "And these youths we have to very intensively prepare for their special task right now."[451] Finding the right people, though, proved difficult.

Upper management decided on 300 people who would be sent to Belcamp, all of them proven Young Men and Women. To locate the employees in a giant multinational corporation, however, was not easy. In a letter to four executives, Jan made clear his frustrations with the process: "Finally received the 300 personnel cards of people on the rise. But only by accident do I know where some of these people are. It is written on many of the cards that they're in Zlín, but they are not in Zlín at all ... it makes little sense to have all of these cards if they cannot tell us where the employee is."[452] Still, the men

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[449] Meeting of upper management, May 15, 1939. Ředitelství BŠP různé osobní záležitosti internátů 1936-1939, K.1223, č. 192, MZA-Zlín.
[450] Meeting of upper management, May 15, 1939. Ředitelství BŠP různé osobní záležitosti internátů 1936-1939, K.1223, č. 192, MZA-Zlín.
[451] Letter, unknown author. Ředitelství BŠP různé osobní záležitosti internátů 1936-1939, K.1223, č. 192, MZA-Zlín.
[452] Jan Baťa, Sept. 10, 1939. Ředitelství BŠP různé osobní záležitosti internátů 1936-1939, K.1223, č. 192, MZA-Zlín.

and women were tracked down for the most part and arrived in the United States from summer 1939 to fall 1940.

They were people like Marie Kouřilová, Karel Aster, and Arnošt Meisler, people who were young, exceptional, and whose loyalty had never been in question. All three were sent to Belcamp in 1939. Kouřilová, 17, graduated from the Baťa School of Work with excellent marks, and her "attitude toward the factory was always very good."[453] Nineteen-year-old Aster had a year of English training, was "a good Czech," had no debt, and "a sense of responsibility."[454] Meisler, a Jew and also possibly a genius, spoke five languages fluently. Older than most of those chosen, at 35 Meisler had a family and years of experience as a correspondent and rayon worker. The historian Martin Marek has argued that the company selected Jews to go abroad not because of their heritage but because of their skills.[455] In the case of Meisler, this seems to apply, but with a few lingering questions; why was he one of the only ones chosen with a young family? In any case, these young, loyal workers found themselves at the NYWF on tourist visas before being quickly sent south to Maryland. Soon, they would be labeled dangerous elements by the FBI, as Baťa's move into the United States turned into a disaster.

While the company was sending young people into the United States, the Federal Bureau of Investigation began to sour on Jan's dealings. The FBI grew increasingly interested in his operations in Maryland during the brief presidential campaign of Millard Tydings, a Democratic Maryland senator at odds with Franklin D. Roosevelt. Partially financed by Jan, who had made statements in the company press about the dangers of

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453 M. Kouřilová. Osobní kartotéky, K 1123, č. 89, MZA-Zlín.

454 K. Aster. Osobní kartotéky, K 1123, č. 89, MZA-Zlín.

455 Martin Marek, "Z baťovského Zlína do světa: Směry transferu a kvalifikační kritéria přesouvaných baťovských zaměstnanců v letech 1938-1941," *Moderní dějiny. Časopis pro dějiny 19. a 20. století* 19, no. 1 (2011): 157-197.

"Red Roosevelt," Tydings wanted to return the Democrats to a fiscally and socially conservative party. He took a drubbing in the primaries, gaining nine of 1,093 total votes at the convention.[456] Jan's foray into American politics proved foolish, as it reversed hard-earned concessions from the United States. Just a year before, in the spring of 1938, the U.S. had reached a historic trade agreement with Czechoslovakia, an agreement which raised the quota of Czechoslovak shoes (almost entirely Baťa-made) allowed into the U.S. from 650,000 to 4.8 million pairs per year.[457] Now, after a "policy shift" in Washington, which occurred a few months after Tydings' defeat in the primaries, only 10 of the requested 100 work visas for Czech specialists to come and build Belcamp were permitted to Baťa.[458]

Still, work continued at a furious pace. Baťa telegrammed Zlín in September for more workers to "tour the world's fair," obviously a way to get workers into Belcamp. This too would prove harmful for Jan's American plans. For in that same month, the FBI launched an investigation into Jan's supposedly "Nazi Drive in the Americas," eventually accusing him of bringing in illegal Czech "teachers," some 350 of them. These people largely got to Maryland through tourist visas to see the NYWF.[459] Having arrived only in June 1940, by September Jan had worn out his welcome. The U.S. government was becoming increasingly suspicious of his loyalty and business practices. In order to try to persuade the government of his apolitical intentions, Jan decided to move to Washington D.C.

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456 David Leip, "1940 Presidential Election Results," *Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections* (July 31, 2005).
457 "Czechoslovak Shoes," *The New York Times*, March 13, 1938.
458 "Policy Shift Puts Immigration Ban on Baťa Shoe Men," *The New York Times*, December 29, 1939.
459 See Valenta, *Žil jsem s miliardářem*, 145.

While in D.C., Jan had perhaps his defining moment in the U.S., when he refused to publicly denounce the Protectorate government or publicly support the Czechoslovak resistance. Accounts of the incident suggest he both feared for the fate of his company back home and deeply mistrusted Eduard Beneš. Baťa, a critic of the government in the late 30s, thought Beneš too leftist, too weak, and too bureaucratic for the country.[460] When Vladimir Hurban visited Baťa in Washington to ask for financial support for the resistance movement, now under the leadership of Beneš, Baťa is reported to have said, "If he will be president, then you can expect not even a cent from me."[461] In light of Jan's refusal to publicly denounce the Protectorate, as well as a few bizarre ideas, which included an idea to send the entire Czech populace to Patagonia, Tomáš Jr. and other top executives in Canada lost faith in Jan's abilities to lead the company. Soon, after meeting in New York and Maryland in 1941, Jan and Tomáš became embroiled in a legal struggle over the company that would last nearly a decade.[462] The unity of Baťa had come apart.

After the FBI investigation, the State Department revoked Jan's visa and put him on a "black list" of potential Nazi sympathizers. Jan left the United States to go to Brazil, where he established several company towns in the Brazilian countryside.[463] Belcamp continued its operations all the way into the 1990s, under Canadian-based Baťa management. After the war, once returned to power in Prague, Beneš promptly nationalized Baťa, and the courts convicted Jan in absentia of collaboration in 1947. This

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460 See Valenta, *Žil jsem s miliardářem*, and Ivan Brož, *Chlapi od Baťů: Osudy baťovců v době, kdy šéfoval Jan Baťa* (Praha: Epoch, 2002). During Jan's exile in New York, the men met in a hotel to discuss the fate of their country. According to witnesses, Jan told Beneš that he should leave politics and try his luck making shoes, to which Beneš replied coldly, "I have other plans." Ivan Brož, *Chlapi od Baťů: Osudy baťovců v době, kdy šéfoval Jan Baťa*, 72.

461 Ibid.

462 With few friends in the United States where the eventual trial for the company was held, Jan went on to lose control over most of the company, with the exception of his company towns in Brazil. He would spend a considerable part of his energy trying to get the company back and clear his name.

463 Having traveled to Brazil in 1940 on the request of President Vargas, Baťa had the necessary political connections to start again there. http://www.batuv-dum.cz/

conviction would be rescinded only in 2007 when a Czech court officially cleared his name.[464] He never returned to Czechoslovakia and died in Brazil in 1965.

Without the NYWF, one wonders whether the Baťa Company would have gone to the United States at all, for the fair allowed the company to obtain necessary visas. Furthermore, one wonders what Baťa would be today, had executives not decided to move to the United States. Perhaps it would not have been able to remain a dominant force in shoe production and sales as it would have been nationalized by the Third Reich. Or perhaps it would have been even stronger; having a united leadership and fewer governmental restrictions as it chose a different country with a less powerful shoe manufacturers union. Thus, the Czechoslovak pavilion and its "Baťa, Baťa, Baťa" might fairly be described as a crucial turning point for the company – a turn that unhinged the company from the future of Czechoslovakia. For the vision of the future of Czechoslovakia initially designed for the NYWF, highly influenced by the Baťa system, was abandoned, in many cases by the same men who had championed it earlier, and replaced with an uncertain, zealously national vision. The welfare capitalist dreams of the company lost their relevance as a profound gulf opened between the industrial utopia of Baťa and the victim identity of the emerging Czechoslovak government-in-exile. Thus, the company's participation at the NYWF was both a high-water mark for the company's influence on the imagined community of Czechoslovakia and a failure. Valenta's memory of the pavilion left out the most important point of them all, that though visually dominant, Baťa no longer fit into Czechoslovakia.

[464] http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curraffrs/jan-antonin-batas-name-cleared-after-sixty-years

Chapter 8: Conclusion

On April 2 and 3, 2007, the city of Zlín organized a conference to "morally cleanse the name of J.A. Bat'a."465 Along with a series of lectures that made the case for Jan's innocence and forthrightness during the Second World War and illustrated how important he was to the development of the company and town, organizers unveiled a statue of Jan in a park just across from the old Bat'a administrative headquarters, the "21". Jan's Brazilian born offspring, a group of notable Zlínians, as well as Thomas Bat'a Jr., all attended the event. Condemned by the postwar Beneš regime and then by the Communist Party as a collaborator and an oppressive industrialist, Jan's life had seemed to come full circle with the commemoration.

Indeed, official histories and commemorative events since the fall of communism have become crucial in shaping the Bat'a legacy in public memory. The critics have largely been silenced by the political change and the drying up of state and university money for independent historical research. In place of the lengthy diatribes against the company under the socialist regime, there is now a plethora of publications and conferences sponsored by the town, Tomas Bat'a University, and the Tomas Bat'a Archive, which all have strong links to the company itself. This trend threatens to flatten the historic record, much like what communist critics did, by removing the darker sides to the Bat'a project and eliminating the important questions about how Bat'a's corporate empire manufactured consent and marginalized dissent. For it seems very uncomfortable to a state trying to rescue the myth of the First Republic of Czechoslovakia as a golden age to have to come to terms with the ambiguities of a company run city in the midst of a democratic country.

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465 "Socha Jana A. Bati a conference o něm." http://batastory.net/cs/milniky/jan-antonin-bata-zivot-a-dilo-pokracovatel-prace-tomase-bati.

Bat'a's Zlín did not exist in an authoritarian state, but it became a totalitarian company town nonetheless. Because of its small size, poverty, and post-World War One turmoil, the valley could do little to resist the revolutionary impulses of rationalization. Everyday life became enmeshed in a totalitarian project designed to sweep away the past's daily rhythms, as the Bat'a project turned a sleepy town into the nexus for a massive industrial enterprise and a crucial sight for the transformation of European daily life. It provided a democratic shopping experience to people across the world, provided a relatively high quality of life for its loyal factory workers, and de-emphasized nationality. Meanwhile, the company created a sophisticated system of surveillance and discipline that sought out the most intimate details of employees' lives. We have reports of a declining infant mortality rate and higher wages during the Bat'a era, counterbalanced against the reports of the personnel inspectors, which detailed workers' private affairs. The system, to borrow from Noam Chomsky, was able to manufacture consent in a particularly modern way, as it offered a trade that few people at the time could refuse: personal privacy and democracy for a relatively well-paid, secure, and comfortable life. Bat'a, then, provides ample evidence of both the light and dark sides of modernity.[466]

By investigating the varied experiences of people who lived in Zlín, this work has sought to complicate normative pictures of the Bat'a era. By turning attention to the debates and implementation of something that radically changed people's lives, the rationalization of everyday life, I have shown Bat'a to present a particular challenge to the ideas of First Republic democracy. How far were people willing to go to trade individual freedom for employment, stability, and order? Locating the stories of people

[466] Detlev Peukert's work on modernity informs this work throughout. Peukert's work, though at times overly ambitious, offers an outstanding insight into the contradictions of modernity. For him, modernity, with its emphasis on the power of science to solve all social problems, created new social and cultural forms that were politically malleable. See, *The Weimar Republic: the crisis of classical modernity*. London: Allen Lane, 1991.

like Marie Urbašková, a prostitute who led police on a fool's errand for men she accused of having a sexual disease, lied to them about her name, and was found out to be a most wanted con artist, I seek to peel away the façade of the utopian company project to suggest that the company never obtained complicity with its subjects. Revealing the untidy underbelly of Zlín is significant because it challenges the dominant historical narratives of Czechoslovakia in the interwar period. Too little is known about how the people who were integrated within the Bat'a system acted, for a lack of balance in the discussion of the social dimension of the built utopia is one of the key characteristics of the Zlín discourse and myth. This has led to claims that the built spaces and surveillance system of Bat'a's Zlín was capable of determining the behavior of individuals. The social essence of Zlín, how the Bat'a system was actively interpreted and appropriated by the people who lived there- this is the research gap that this project has filled.

Thus the Bat'a story is a story that helps us understand what modernity and modernization meant to hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world and offers a striking example of a particular solution to the nefarious effects of industrialization. Indeed, I would argue that the Bata system represented a distinct civilization in the middle of Europe, with its own phrases, myths, heroes, and ethics. And it was a civilization that grew to have tremendous influence within Czechoslovakia both then and now.

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